

©

# AGAINST WIND AND TIDE.

BY

HOLME LEE, *perman. for*

AUTHOR OF "SYLVAN HOLT'S DAUGHTER," "KATHIE BRANDE," ETC., ETC.

*Harriet Parr.*

"Are these things then necessities?"

Then let us meet them like necessities."

SHAKESPEARE.

NEW YORK:  
W. A. TOWNSEND AND COMPANY  
1860.

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1860. June 15

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Prof. James R. Lowell  
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C. A. ALVORD,  
STEREOTYPER AND PRINTER,  
VANDEWATER ST. N. Y.

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### Setting Sail.

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The which observed, a man may prophesy,  
With a near aim of the main chance of things,  
As not yet come to life ; which in their seeds  
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Such things become the brood and hatch of time."  
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That in part are prophecies, and in part  
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The master was a tall, slender, and stooping man, with a grave blue eye and a wholesome winter-apple red in his face. He was a north-country man, a personage of intelligence and simplicity, who had drifted into the island nobody exactly knew how or why, and settled himself down at Chinelyn as village pedagogue. He was quite by himself in the cottage, but no neat-handed wife or daughter could have kept it in fairer order. The low-browed, whitewashed schoolroom, with its hacked desks and benches, its slates on the walls and ink-splashes on the floor, was now filled to its remotest corner with the pleasant sunshine, while the open doorway framed as lovely a vignette of spring as ever Nature tinted in her most poetic mood.

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The master himself might have been forgiven if he had played truant on such a sunshiny tempting morning. Indeed, what was it but the truant spirit trifling round about his imagination that drew him from his desk to the open doorway, from the doorway to the garden-gate, and through the garden-gate into the sandy lane?

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It was a lovely scene that spread itself before his idle gaze. There was a group of sleek, dappled cows feeding deliciously upon the new grass, who just turned their lazy heads, looked at him with benign eyes for a moment, and then resumed their feast. Peering above the woods were the tall wreathed chimneys and steep roof of the Manor Farm, and spreading to the sun-dimmed verge of the horizon was the wide, blue expanse of an unruffled sea. Above all, there was a swelling knoll of golden furze, and planing over it was a hawk intent on some object couched amongst the brush. Who could resist that? Certainly not our schoolmaster, who had played truant when he was a boy! The hawk was stationary for some moments, then it shot down straight for a few yards, and paused again, as if preparing for its deadly pounce. It had a cruel, sanguinary expression against the cloudless blue; it was the one discord in that Paradise-morning, and the schoolmaster shouted to scare it away. It sailed heavily off, and at the same moment several birds flew out of the furze and winged their way to the woods; but of all that the master's voice had startled, it had startled nothing so much as himself. He set off up the sandy lane as fast as his feet would carry him.

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Ah! what a studious silence, what a beautiful application, reigned amongst all those promising young scholars as his bent figure darkened the sunshine in the doorway! Every nose was pointed down at every slate or book, and every brow wore a calculating frown; you would have said their very hearts were in their tasks. The master stepped to his desk without a word, and cast a shrewd glance all round upon the young hypocrites. It was an interesting picture, and he forbore to disturb its harmonious completeness; he even chose to be blind to the inquisitorial twinkle which now and then shot out toward his countenance from the eye-corner of some scapegrace a degree bolder than the rest, and the presence of the truant, now peacefully seated beside his twin brother, he quite ignored.

## II.

Amongst all those common-place mean or rustic countenances it was rather strange to see two such beautiful heads as the young Hawthornes'. Robert's fair, blond curls, which maturity would darken, his blue eyes, clear, calm, and full, and rich grave lips, his healthy bloom and brown of complexion, made up a visage to which the eye of affection, and its heart too, could turn and turn again with a feeling of repose and dependableness, such as the more striking, and, perhaps, more intellectual face of his brother Cyrus was not calculated to inspire.



Yet Cyrus was generally the greater favorite of the two. His ardent temperament gave a quickness and warmth to his feelings such as were not prominent in Robert's slower and deeper character. His brain, equally vigorous, was more brilliant in conception, and would hereafter be more distinct in utterance, and so much the more powerful as genius is more powerful than talent; but to these spiritual graces, to which the world, as with one consent, accords its homage, were united dangerous faults of temper and disposition such as have ere now made wreck of the finest parts.

If he was more vehement in his affections than Robert, he was also more fickle and capricious; his generosity was an impulse; his judgment was weakened by levity, rashness, indiscretion, petulance; his predilections and antipathies were generally violent and uncertain; he had a thorn of jealous vanity always stinging him in presence of another's superiority; and in every thing he was wilful, headstrong, and exacting. These latter qualities showed themselves nowhere more frequently than in his dealings with his brother. The bond of love between them was strong with that peculiar strength which always appears to unite children of one birth; but as, even there, equality never subsists, the earlier developed character of Cyrus dominated that of his brother. To see them sitting side by side at their desk now was sufficient illustration of this. Robert, who was considerably the taller and the broader of the two, cramped his arms close to his body that Cyrus might have the more room to fling his abroad; which he did with an indolent ease and grace, expressive enough of his self-crowned kingship. There were half-a-dozen boys there physically capable of beating him to a mummy, but there was that sense of repressed power in his air which always served him as shield and buckler; his reputation lay, not so much in what he had done, as in what he was conceived capable of doing, and the elements of fear and admiration entered largely into that universal liking which he attracted and drew to himself.

Robert had his friends too, but they felt him more as one of themselves than Cyrus. Nobody was afraid of him,—nobody, that is, unless there were a question of a combat with him as opponent, for there were not many who cared to stand up before that young lion when he was roused and angry. He had homely, every-day qualities about him, such as simplicity, truth, faithfulness, and fortitude, that gave an idea of

calm, resolute strength; you might lean upon him, and he would not give way; trust him, and he would be silent as the grave; love him, and he would love you without any jealous exaction or weak passionate harrassment, such as Cyrus inflicted upon his often-changed friends. If the future of either was to be mainly influenced by his own peculiar idiosyncrasy—and who can doubt that our lives are all so influenced?—it were easy to prewise that Cyrus would create for himself many a mortification, many a stumbling-block, and that he would wring his cruellest pangs out of his own heart; and it were also easy to see that Robert's troubles would come to him from without, from the hand of God, not from the bitter broadcast seed of passion and wrong-doing, which Cyrus might have to gather in when the time of harvest came.

For their age—they were drawing on to twelve years old—their distinctive traits were very strongly marked. It was time, and more than time, that they were removed from the village school and the tuition of Master Scrope; but their grandfather was penurious of temper, and evaded every proposal that might lead to expense. He had already decided on the line of life each one was to pursue. Cyrus he designed to keep as his own helper and ultimate successor on the Manor Farm, which the Hawthornes had tenanted from generation to generation; Robert was to be sent out of the island to his great-uncle's manufactory of paint and varnish at Walton Minster, and to be duly initiated into its mysteries with a view to carrying it on when his relative should retire from it. With such prospects in view, their grandfather argued, sensibly enough, that a highly polished education was not needed; and as Master Scrope made them good readers, writers, and accountants, he declared that no further instructor should they have.

Those were not the days of universal knowledge, when every body was taught every thing, and the young Hawthornes were not sensible of any very grievous deprivation. If their mother, Mary, in looking at her beautiful boys, sometimes felt ambitious for them—as what mother's heart does not feel for her darlings?—she battled the proud impulse down and held her peace: what had *she*, what had they, to do with pride, ambition, and rising in the world—they of all the boys in Chinelyn, whose very existence there was imputed to her for an indelible disgrace?

Having said thus much in this place, we must say a little more.

### III.

Time was when Mary Hawthorne was not only the most beautiful, but also the blithest and happiest maiden in the parish ; she was a handsome woman still, and a remarkable looking woman, but it needed nothing deeper than the casual glance to trace the footmarks of the anguish that had gone over her soul. She had been a pious good girl too, and that made her misfortunes all the crueller, and, in her own mind, all the more rankling and indelible. But she had no taint of wilful sin chargeable upon her ; *that* even the most censorious and jealous of those who had envied and hated her for her temporary exaltation were ready to admit.

When she was about sixteen there was one night a yacht run aground on the rocky beach below Chinelyn, and in reaching the shore a gentleman, the owner of the skiff, received more than one severe injury which necessitated his immediate removal to some quiet dwelling where he could be comfortably nursed and attended upon. At this date there was no such place at Chinelyn, and Simon Hawthorne gave a reluctant consent to his being carried up to the Manor Farm.

The stranger became known in the village as Sir Philip Nugent, and long after he had regained convalescence he lingered in the neighborhood, or, if he left it, he always returned at the end of two or three days, until, at last, a wonderful rumor went abroad—a rumor which the event authenticated very speedily.

One morning Mary Hawthorne was seen driving away from Chinelyn in a handsome carriage with Sir Philip Nugent by her side. She had been married to him that day by the parish priest at the altar of the parish church, and bitter-tongued scandal had not a word to say. Beautiful Mary was no longer a simple village maiden ; she was my Lady Nugent, wife of a gentleman as handsome as ever stepped, mistress of houses and lands, men-servants and maid-servants, and of more luxuries than the exaggerated rustic imagination could conceive.

Many months—nearly a year—went over, and still Simon Hawthorne held up his head and spoke proudly of Mary—

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Yet Cyrus was generally the greater favorite of the two. His ardent temperament gave a quickness and warmth to his feelings such as were not prominent in Robert's slower and deeper character. His brain, equally vigorous, was more brilliant in conception, and would hereafter be more distinct in utterance, and so much the more powerful as genius is more powerful than talent; but to these spiritual graces, to which the world, as with one consent, accords its homage, were united dangerous faults of temper and disposition such as have ere now made wreck of the finest parts.

If he was more vehement in his affections than Robert, he was also more fickle and capricious; his generosity was an impulse; his judgment was weakened by levity, rashness, indiscretion, petulance; his predilections and antipathies were generally violent and uncertain; he had a thorn of jealous vanity always stinging him in presence of another's superiority; and in every thing he was wilful, headstrong, and exacting. These latter qualities showed themselves nowhere more frequently than in his dealings with his brother. The bond of love between them was strong with that peculiar strength which always appears to unite children of one birth; but as, even there, equality never subsists, the earlier developed character of Cyrus dominated that of his brother. To see them sitting side by side at their desk now was sufficient illustration of this. Robert, who was considerably the taller and the broader of the two, cramped his arms close to his body that Cyrus might have the more room to fling his abroad; which he did with an indolent ease and grace, expressive enough of his self-crowned kingship. There were half-a-dozen boys there physically capable of beating him to a mummy, but there was that sense of repressed power in his air which always served him as shield and buckler; his reputation lay, not so much in what he had done, as in what he was conceived capable of doing, and the elements of fear and admiration entered largely into that universal liking which he attracted and drew to himself.

Robert had his friends too, but they felt him more as one of themselves than Cyrus. Nobody was afraid of him,—nobody, that is, unless there were a question of a combat with him as opponent, for there were not many who cared to stand up before that young lion when he was roused and angry. He had homely, every-day qualities about him, such as simplicity, truth, faithfulness, and fortitude, that gave an idea of

calm, resolute strength; you might lean upon him, and he would not give way; trust him, and he would be silent as the grave; love him, and he would love you without any jealous exaction or weak passionate harrassment, such as Cyrus inflicted upon his often-changed friends. If the future of either was to be mainly influenced by his own peculiar idiosyncrasy—and who can doubt that our lives are all so influenced?—it were easy to prewise that Cyrus would create for himself many a mortification, many a stumbling-block, and that he would wring his cruellest pangs out of his own heart; and it were also easy to see that Robert's troubles would come to him from without, from the hand of God, not from the bitter broadcast seed of passion and wrong-doing, which Cyrus might have to gather in when the time of harvest came.

For their age—they were drawing on to twelve years old—their distinctive traits were very strongly marked. It was time, and more than time, that they were removed from the village school and the tuition of Master Scrope; but their grandfather was penurious of temper, and evaded every proposal that might lead to expense. He had already decided on the line of life each one was to pursue. Cyrus he designed to keep as his own helper and ultimate successor on the Manor Farm, which the Hawthornes had tenanted from generation to generation; Robert was to be sent out of the island to his great-uncle's manufactory of paint and varnish at Walton Minster, and to be duly initiated into its mysteries with a view to carrying it on when his relative should retire from it. With such prospects in view, their grandfather argued, sensibly enough, that a highly polished education was not needed; and as Master Scrope made them good readers, writers, and accountants, he declared that no further instructor should they have.

Those were not the days of universal knowledge, when every body was taught every thing, and the young Hawthornes were not sensible of any very grievous deprivation. If their mother, Mary, in looking at her beautiful boys, sometimes felt ambitious for them—as what mother's heart does not feel for her darlings?—she battled the proud impulse down and held her peace: what had *she*, what had they, to do with pride, ambition, and rising in the world—they of all the boys in Chinelyn, whose very existence there was imputed to her for an indelible disgrace?

Having said thus much in this place, we must say a little more.

### III.

Time was when Mary Hawthorne was not only the most beautiful, but also the blithest and happiest maiden in the parish; she was a handsome woman still, and a remarkable looking woman, but it needed nothing deeper than the casual glance to trace the footmarks of the anguish that had gone over her soul. She had been a pious good girl too, and that made her misfortunes all the crueller, and, in her own mind, all the more rankling and indelible. But she had no taint of wilful sin chargeable upon her; *that* even the most censorious and jealous of those who had envied and hated her for her temporary exaltation were ready to admit.

When she was about sixteen there was one night a yacht run aground on the rocky beach below Chinelyn, and in reaching the shore a gentleman, the owner of the skiff, received more than one severe injury which necessitated his immediate removal to some quiet dwelling where he could be comfortably nursed and attended upon. At this date there was no such place at Chinelyn, and Simon Hawthorne gave a reluctant consent to his being carried up to the Manor Farm.

The stranger became known in the village as Sir Philip Nugent, and long after he had regained convalescence he lingered in the neighborhood, or, if he left it, he always returned at the end of two or three days, until, at last, a wonderful rumor went abroad—a rumor which the event authenticated very speedily.

One morning Mary Hawthorne was seen driving away from Chinelyn in a handsome carriage with Sir Philip Nugent by her side. She had been married to him that day by the parish priest at the altar of the parish church, and bitter-tongued scandal had not a word to say. Beautiful Mary was no longer a simple village maiden; she was my Lady Nugent, wife of a gentleman as handsome as ever stepped, mistress of houses and lands, men-servants and maid-servants, and of more luxuries than the exaggerated rustic imagination could conceive.

Many months—nearly a year—went over, and still Simon Hawthorne held up his head and spoke proudly of Mary—

"My daughter Mary, Lady Nugent, who is traveling abroad with her husband,"—until one bitter March night, when a frozen north-east wind was whistling over the downs, there came a low tremulous knock at the door of the Manor Farm, and when Simon hurried to open it, his child stood outside alone.

"Take me in, dear father!" cried she, and fell, half fainting, upon his breast.

It is a piteous story, but it has been told often before. She had been cruelly deceived; she was about to become a mother, but she was no wife. Sir Philip Nugent had been previously married to a foreign lady, from whom he was judicially separated, but who was still alive. Mary had extracted this confession from his own reluctant lips, and evading his watchfulness, she made her escape and fled from him to her father's protection. He pursued her; he tried to win her back; he offered to make upon her and her offspring any settlement she chose to demand; but Mary, strong in her purity of spirit, however weak she might be in her love, refused ever to look upon his face again; and old Simon Hawthorne flung back his lavish proffers of money in his teeth. I shall not attempt to make Sir Philip Nugent's apology. That he had been ill-used himself was no plea for inveigling Mary by such a base deception as he had practised on her innocence. Still less can his passionate love be admitted in excuse. He departed in anger, and returned abroad, to chafe over his loss and disappointment; and while Mary's shame and misery were still new to her, her twin boys struggled into the world. She had them baptized by the names of Cyrus and Robert Hawthorne, and the villagers resumed calling her also by her father's name.

Since then twelve long years had gone over her head—years how woful, how weary, with vain longing and vain sorrow none but her Father in Heaven will ever know! They had given to her countenance the refinement of a suffering unmerited, a holy, a tender beauty, far beyond the fatal loveliness of her youth. Surely one could not look up so long and so faithfully to the throne of mercy without, like her, winning somewhat of angel grace and angel fairness too!

The father of the boys still lived, but Mary was never known to mention him, though Cyrus could scarcely come before her eyes without vividly recalling not only his features

and general air, but also his simplest gestures, and the very tones of his voice. Perhaps this was the subtle reason why her heart clave to him with greater tenderness than to his brother, though she thought it was because he showed a more eager and exacting love for her. I would willingly evade all further allusion to the man who had done her such grievous wrong, but if their story is to be faithfully told, that would be impossible. Mary's children inherited from him too much for their paternity ever to be ignored: Cyrus was his literal copy, personally, mentally, and morally; and though Robert took of his mother's inner character and expression, he also had the noble visage, the high courage, the strong sound brain, that were hereditary in the family from which Sir Philip Nugent sprang. Without having any knowledge of the actual truth, the boys were intuitively sensible of a difference between themselves and their associates. Neither was ever guilty of a lie, a meanness, a cowardice; but this moral rectitude might be the graft of their mother's good teaching; for if they were children of sorrow, they were also children of many prayers.

Cyrus, like most boys of lively imagination, was a day dreamer. In his vanity he loved to identify himself with all histories of princes in disguise, or wrongfully dispossessed heirs; and long before Robert awoke to any idea of romance as attached to himself, his brother had woven a tissue of complicated adventures which invariably terminated with glorious triumph to them both. He had reticence enough to keep these visions to himself, but Mary more than suspected them, and looked forward with shrinking dread to the hour when she must take the boys into the secret of her heart, and tell them all the truth concerning themselves and her own mournful motherhood.

#### IV.

Though old Simon Hawthorne might, in his own mind, destine Cyrus to the quiet, eventless, pastoral life, the lad would never follow it, and he had confided as much to Master Scrope, who kept his counsel faithfully, because he sympathized with him. The schoolmaster recognised in him that genius which none other—not even Mary—did, and he had a sublime respect for it. He was one of those who allow to genius a moral, or *immoral* licence such as they will ac-

cord neither to passion, temptation, weakness, nor ignorance. He would say that genius was not amenable to ordinary rules or codes of law, yet he did not grant to Cyrus a *practical* exemption from his own regulations; in which he differed not from many amongst ourselves, who find it a hard task to fit our acts to our theory; a sentiment of justice interfered with him, as indolence, caprice, or selfishness may interfere with us.

Close beside the master's desk there were three hanging shelves of books, not school-books, dull and dreary, but play books, poetry books, romances, travels, biographies of learned and famous men, and a few scientific works, not attractively illustrated as are our popular editions nowadays, but plain and solid both inside and out. The young Hawthornes had free access to these shelves, and when lessons were over for the morning and the other lads gone out, they marched straight up to them, and grasped a favorite volume each. They were not permitted to carry the books home, for they were Master Scrope's only wealth, and he set especial store by them; so they had a custom of seating themselves on the school-door step in the sunshine, and reading there until the clock in the corner warned them home to dinner.

While they were thus employed, the master strode between them into the garden to cut a salad for his midday repast, dressed it after a fashion of his own with a hard-boiled egg of his speckled hen's laying, and then ate it with a hunch of coarse brown bread which he had kneaded and baked himself. It was lucky for poor old Master Scrope that, with his northern breeding, he had imbibed a natural turn for economy; else, instead of bread and lettuce with contentment, he must have had emptiness and sorrow for his dinner often. Education was not at a premium amongst the rising generation at Chinelyn, and it must be allowed that the master was in no danger of growing too plump on his penny-a-week vocation. Cyrus had seen the frugal shape and substance of the old man's dinner too often to have his attention distracted thereby from his book now, and he pored steadily on until Master Scrope touched him on the shoulder after thrice repeating the same question: "Where did you go this morning, Cyrus, instead of coming to school?" Then indolently lifting his eyes from the attractive page, but without detaching his thoughts from it, he replied.

"I went down on the shore to see the boats come in;" after



a moment's pause he added, with a touch of audacity in his voice and a significant glimmer in his dark eyes, "I came up by Fusmount and saw that hawk—you know." The master smiled.

"I was playing truant too, even an old man tires of being wise every day, and all day," said he.

This sentiment caused Robert to look up. "I wish you would give us a holiday this afternoon, master; I want to go through the landslip, and it is just the weather, neither too sultry, nor too windy, nor too any thing, but just right," was his plea.

"Why don't you *take* holiday?" whispered Cyrus, with a mischievous defiant glance at the master, who feigned neither to hear nor see. He was never the pedagogue out of school; from which it may be safely inferred that he was not heartily in love with his vocation; for there is none other that sticks so adhesively as that, if it ever succeed in pervading the affections and habits.

To make the master's confession for him once for all, let us say that he regarded himself as a fine actor spoiled; a noble tragedian cast away on the barren intelligences of an obscure village; a great artist, doomed by adverse fate to waste his talent on a primer and a cane! Which of us has *not* railed at fortune more or less, for pushing us off the stage where we hoped to play a part and win distinction, and resolutely handing us into another theatre where the rôles are all strange and distasteful to us? What cares she, imperious jade! Not a sous! She portions our task, and pins us down to it spite of our yea or nay! I protest this world seems to me often a game of the most wilful cross purposes! There's one whose natural mind goes clad in motley, and whose outward husk drapes itself in a high tragedy robe; there's another, with dust and ashes powdering his fool's cap and bells, and sackcloth instead of juggler's fleshings; there's another, of port grand, grave, and serious, that every idle spite makes a mock at, as if dignity were a mere ninepin set up for ill-luck to bowl down into the mire! When I see one of these unhappy travesties I can never help falling into the moralist's parenthetic view.

There was a warm yellow, noonday sunshine steeping the three figures in the schoolroom doorway. The master had his dish of salad on the end of the desk, and ate it meditatively and slowly; he possessed a smattering of classical

knowledge, and could season his dinner of herbs with recollections of great men, who, in their adversity, had fared no more sumptuously than he, and doubtless he did so season it. His rusty black figure, his long gray hair, his bony, placid face, and frosty eye, might have served as a model of a village philosopher. There also, to complete the picture, were his young disciples at his feet; the passionate enthusiast, whose way would be one season a luxuriant flowery land, and the next a thorny wilderness; and the patient learner who would put by in his heart every lesson that experience might teach him, and would guide himself after the everlasting beacon of the cross in the sky, until he could fold his sails and cast anchor in the still waters of the fair heavenly haven.

Master Scrope had not the gift of the second sight, but he had a shrewd discernment, a clear perception of the finer traits of human nature and individual character; and as he sat contemplating the two youthful heads, he might have prophesied the main features of the lads' lives within a line or two of the truth. There was the repose of quiet strength in Robert's attitude, a grave clearness in his countenance; but in Cyrus's mobile features there was the latent fire, the pre-anxious, melancholy expression, which physiognomists have professed to trace even in the portraits of those foredoomed to do and suffer much. His variable spirit passed in smile and gloom over his face, like light and cloud over the sky; as distinct to see, as easy to interpret; amongst his weaknesses and his errors, he was rarely a dissembler; he betrayed himself at his best and at his worst at once.

The book he was now reading was an old brown volume, entitled a "History of the Stage." It introduced him first to the cart of Thespis, and then carried him swiftly down through the dark ages to the days of monkish mysteries and moralities; to the days of Shakspeare, and Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Congreve, Farquhar, Dryden, and the rest of them. In its pages he made acquaintance with fair Kitty Clive, with Mistress Eleanor Gwynne, Mistress Woffington and others—their contemporaries; but there was no mention of the three then celebrities—Kemble, Siddons, and Kean—the book was before their reign, in fact.

Immature genius has generally the trick of imitation strong, so whatever interested Cyrus became, for the nonce, the foundation of his day dreams. When he heard or read

about great actors, one half-hour he was treading the stage with tragic power, and drawing tears from every eye as maddened Lear; the next he was convulsing his audience in some broad farcical part, and again he was causing young hearts to beat warm and fast as he made love to Juliet—an impassioned Romeo. His imagination did not always bind him to achieve success. Sometimes he would heroically support persecution prompted by envious rivals; he was great *there*; full of dignity and fortitude; he would even let himself be conquered, and then what did he do? I am sorry to say he *died*; when he ceased to enthrall he always died! A dreary after-time of obscurity never dropped upon him and left him to fade out of remembrance; shouts of applause or yells of jealous hatred heralded him to a grave, which men's loving, repentant tears were to keep ever green. If, in books, he went down to the sea in ships, he was the navigator who discovered new worlds; if he marched with an army, he was the general who conquered kingdoms; if he was the sage in his closet, art and science were for ever indebted to him; and the conclusion was always the same—a shrine of immortal honor visited by pilgrim feet from generation to generation.

An analysis of Robert's character would not show any such wildly egotistical aspirations. Therein was a deep, tender love for his mother, a sentiment that pervaded all his nature, a quiet enthusiasm for things beautiful and true, a serviceable energy and a persistent power of work; but he never fancied himself a hero to any body, and he was certainly not a hero to himself. His volume was one that Cyrus would have called *dry*; it was a geological work, and the subject was not treated in a lively manner, but it was *real*, and therefore he liked it. Hugh Miller had not penned his picturesque stories of the Old World, or tracked the foot-prints of the Creator through it, when Robert Hawthorne was a boy, else he would have made another fervent young disciple of nature. Master Scrope had recently taken to the study, under the impression that he had enough of men and women, and should find stones more interesting and satisfactory; but he never acknowledged to having done so. Indeed, on one occasion when Mr. Ford, the parish priest of Chinelyn, ventured to impugn the character of some of the books upon his shelves, he was excited to reply with almost disrespectful warmth; and there afterward appeared in the

"Banner of Freedom," a slightly revolutionary paper edited by a Scotch cousin of his, an article on literature, containing the following tirade *à propos* of Mr. Ford's remarks :

"The poet, novelist, and playwright study human nature, and try to compel its secrets from it. They see or strive to see how it was wrought upon by the powers of heaven, earth, and hell. I uphold that this study is a nobler one than your geologist's, who goes about chipping stones and grubbing amongst the cast-off sloughs of this old serpent the world ; it is nobler than your botanist's rage for compassing land and sea to find a new weed ; than your entomologist's rejoicing over a strange beetle, and naming it vaingloriously after himself ! The climax of the whole universe, the Creator's masterpiece, is the heart of man ! Where else is there such infinite variety, complication, versatility ? Answer me that, irreverent blocks, who set what their Maker destined for king and ruler beneath the earth which was made for him to walk upon, the vegetables that cover its nakedness, and the creeping things that hide as he approaches !"

Assuredly Master Scrope was not born for a village schoolmaster !

## V.

Cyrus Hawthorne unscrupulously availed himself of the advice that he had offered to the rejection of his more conscientious brother, and took the half-holiday which the schoolmaster would not grant without inconveniencing himself by announcing his intentions. He directed his truant steps toward the Chine, through which he meant to descend to the beach, always his favorite resort.

The Chine was an immense rift into the body of the earth, at the bottom of which rushed a narrow, but impetuous torrent ; at its head, this torrent poured over a lofty slab of rock, and formed a miniature waterfall, whence the spray rose in glittering clouds. The sinuosities of the rift, which the rude steps and pathways were obliged to follow, perpetually disclosed lovely surprises in the scenery. For five minutes, Cyrus walked through a green gloom of overhanging verdure, almost as rich and various in its spring coloring as when the trees have put on their warmer autumnal robes. Then he crossed a frail plank bridge, thrown over the abyss, and found himself exposed to the full rays of the afternoon sunshine between two earthy cliffs, and bare and black. A

little farther, and as the Chine widened, the foliage became still richer and more luxuriant. Through the branches of elms, beeches, chesnuts, and sycamores, the yellow light filtered down upon emerald grasses, with here and there a vivid patch of wild flowers, such as love a moist vaporous atmosphere. An occasional fruit tree, full of pink and white blossoms, and the bright dark leaves of a holly or laurel, still further diversified the hues of the picture, and looking upward to the narrow band of sky which roofed the Chine, light, feathery branches of fir, of yew, of alder, and hazel, were seen waving against the blue. The cliffs near the water were clothed with a close, dark green, velvety lichen, and from many a cleft and crevice hung down long tendrils of the small vein-leaved ivy, and ribbon-like tassels of the glossy hart's tongue fern. Such a mellowness of warm light suffused the air, such a silence, except for the trickling music of the waterfall, and the lapping of the tide upon the shore, that Cyrus, ever open to impressions and beguilements of beauty, lingered there longer than his wont. There is a moral meaning and a moral influence in the varying scenes and seasons of earth, to which imaginative minds are peculiarly susceptible, and as he idled through this wilderness of verdant beauty, his spirits rose to a wild exaltation, as if the youth of the spring and the youth in his veins ran with a swifter, warmer current in this budding May-time of the year than at any other.

On the eastern side of the Chine, near where its rivulet flowed out, and lost itself among the sea-sands, there was a little cottage perched aloft upon an elevated plateau, and almost buried in verdure, like a bird's nest in the branches of an elm. In this cottage lived two fishermen, named Brett—father and son—of no very good repute; for they were smugglers, when smuggling was a profession of risk and profit. From them, Cyrus Hawthorne, and Robert too, had heard many a wild tale of the sea, its perils, marvels, and fascinations; for the lads were favorites with the two fishermen, especially with the younger. As Cyrus came whistling down the steep path opposite the cottage, he saw the old man sitting outside the door, mending his nets in the sunshine, while his son stood a little way off on a prominence, which commanded the whole arc of the bay. He had his glass in his hand, and was intently watching the movements of a sail upon the horizon.

"What craft is yon. Mark?" asked Cyrus, springing up the precipitous ascent to the young man's side; "it is a fast sailer."

"Here, father, look you if you know it. It has been a long while a stranger in these waters, if it is what I take it to be," said Mark, handing the glass to the old man, who had dropped his task, and come hobbling toward him.

Brett himself seemed for a moment surprised or baffled, and when he lowered the glass after his examination, Mark asked if he had ever seen it before.

"Yes," was the brief reply, "and so have you, Mark. It is the 'Stormy Petrel,' sure enough."

The younger man turned a savage look seaward, and then walked away. Cyrus, in astonishment, inquired what was the matter with him.

"I told you once, my lad, that if you came about my place, there must be no questions, and no tellings of what you might see," replied Brett, curtly. "Do you want the glass yourself?"

Cyrus took it for a minute or two, but soon rendered it back, and ran down upon the shore while the old fisherman returned to his net-mending, and his son strode away to the top of the cliff to watch the strange sail. Cyrus entertained no virtuous horror of smugglers and smugglings, and in the idea that the "Stormy Petrel" was an inopportune member of the preventive service which would dispute his friend's method of importation for some time to come, he did not wish it any special good luck, but went on his way to a wild rocky point, where, at low water, it was his custom to seek for anemones and other strange things of the sea, such as were left in the deep pools, and clinging to the stones by the retiring tide. The beach at Chinelyn varied greatly from season to season; its cliffs of earth and sandstone were continually crumbling down or falling in heavy masses, which the action of the water, in process of time, hardened to the appearance of rock.

The wonders of the deep were the earliest inspiration of Cyrus's muse, and this afternoon, when he was tired of hunting for new specimens, he clambered up the red cliffs to a point whence he had a glorious view over the bay, and as the white ships went and came in the distance, and the gulls skimmed the opalescent water lightly as foam flecks, he took out a little red pocket-book and began to write. He

was not over difficult in the matters of rhyme and metre (nor always of reason either) at this date, but Mary fondly cherished all his verses, and thought them beautiful; she was a gentle critic, and his songs made music in her ears. How much of them was original, and how much was merely the reflection of other minds upon his, she never inquired. He was her poet-boy, the pride and delight of her heart, and if any body had made her hear the voices of which his was only the echo, she would have said in her loving soul, if she did not speak it with her lips, that his had still the finer, purer, sweeter, loftier tone.

While Cyrus was absorbed in his composition, the vessel which had excited such visible annoyance in the younger Brett, approached nearer in shore, and a boat containing two persons put off from it. His verses done, Cyrus descended from his eerie, and turned his steps in the direction of the place where it would land its passenger. The tide was flowing in now, and brought the boat through the water so fast that when he reached the little pier of loose stones, Mark Brett was just casting out a rope to secure it. The elder fisherman had come down from mending his nets, and Robert also, school being out, had found his way to the beach in search of his brother. The two lads, in their idle, affectionate way, twined their arms round each other's neck, and stood watching while a fine-looking gentleman stepped up upon the pier within half a dozen yards of them. His visage was brown and much lined, but it was a handsome face still, and of a singularly attractive expression. The boys looked at him with rustic admiration, but without obtrusiveness, until they perceived that he also was intently regarding them. He did not speak, but Mark Brett, following the direction of his gaze, and seeing where it rested, said, significantly—

“Those two are Mistress Mary Hawthorne's boys—twins, Sir Philip Nugent. I remember you, sir, of old.”

The stranger started to find himself thus abruptly recognized, but he approached the boys, who had retreated to a little distance, and exclaimed, while a glow of natural emotion suffused his face—

“Are you indeed Mary Hawthorne's sons? Is she up at the Manor Farm still?”

The boys were silent; they felt rather than guessed in what relation this noble-looking gentleman stood toward

them, and for a minute or two Cyrus was fool enough to imagine that his romantic day-dreams were coming true; by what prescience Robert divined the reality I cannot tell, but that he did divine it, and was stung to his heart's core with shame, the burning crimson that dyed his face as his eyes and his father's met betrayed. I have intimated elsewhere that Robert had more of his mother in his countenance than Cyrus; perhaps that shamed look of his reminded Sir Philip Nugent of some painful scene betwixt Mary and himself long ago. He stood a moment or two as if pondering what to do, but, at last, he made a sign to the boys that they should accompany him up the Chine, and they obeyed. Cyrus was the least shy of the two, and though restless and disquieted, he kept beside the stranger all the way; but it was on Robert's shoulder that Sir Philip chose to lean his hand, and it was Robert's lineaments that he perused with the most affectionate interest. He asked many questions about their mother, assiduously striving to veil his anxiety under a pretence of simple friendship; he asked about their grandfather and about their own bringing up, but all was left to Cyrus to answer. Robert's calm nature was stirred to its depths; when he would have spoken, a strangling sensation in his throat stifled the words; it was an agony of shame and torture that the lad underwent during that short walk. When they reached the Chine head, Sir Phillip Nugent paused.

"You are going home to your mother now, are you not?" he said.

Cyrus replied that they were.

"Say nothing of having met any stranger here; you will see me at the Manor Farm ere long; till then be silent."

He did not wait for a promise, neither did they offer to give one, and they parted at once; Sir Philip Nugent taking the road into the village, and the boys turning homeward.

"What does it mean, Robin?" Cyrus asked confusedly, as they went slowly across the fields; who is that gentleman?"

"Cannot you feel, Cyrus? you are quite like him in the face," was the reluctant answer.

Cyrus colored and glanced uneasily at his brother. It was some time before either spoke again, but when they got into the Manor garden amongst the shady trees, an exciting discussion commenced between them—a discussion which I am afraid left poor, passionate, poetical Cyrus but very little of his magnificent day-dreams remaining.



## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

## THEIR MOTHER.

"I have lingered by the past,  
As by a death-bed, with unwonted love,  
And such forgiveness as we bring to those  
Who can offend no more."—*Balder.*  
SYDNEY DOBELL.

## I.

CHINELYN MANOR HOUSE, where the Hawthornes lived, was a large, square-built, steep-roofed edifice, with a heavy cornice round it, and uniformly placed windows, rather high than wide, which were furnished with seats throughout. The fire places, by some architectural freak, peculiar either to the island or the date of the house, were placed each in a corner of the rooms, which were otherwise sufficiently lofty and well-proportioned. Their plenishing was neither new nor choice, and the whole—the kitchen excepted—looked bare and comfortless, probably from the fact that the best of them were rarely entered except for cleaning purposes.

But upstairs there was a little parlor looking eastward over the sea, with an old wooden balcony before its window which the boys always called "Mother's Room." This balcony was almost falling with decay, but there grew up over it on one side a bush of sweet clematis, while a red cluster rose garlanded it on the other. Mary had trained them there from a girl, and if they had had the gift of speech they could have told us all the story of her life. Many a time had she stood out there watching toward Longridge white cliffs as a sail went and came into the bay—her lover's sail. Spies had seen the flutter of her dress in the early morning and late evening, which signalled that she was on the lookout for him. Poor, simple, loving little heart! happy

vigils were those, happy wakings in the gray dawn, happy dreams in the long night when he was just coming or but just gone! And spies had seen her, too, in her deep, deep sorrow, gazing wistfully—oh, so wistfully—over the sea where that fatal sail might, perhaps, come never again! They had seen her there with her children almost daily since and a right pleasant place for them it was. What should they know of eager hopes enjoyed, of dumb, dead agonies there suffered through? Mother's eyes were all sunshine looking into their baby eyes, mother's voice was all song and sweetness over their rest, mother's heart was warm to the core for love of them! They were God's gifts to her; if she had been childless as well as wronged, she would have gone to her grave uncalled.

The boys to their lives' end had a sacred remembrance of this room; such a remembrance as most of us retain of the church where we went as children—of the chamber where we have looked our last on a dear, dear friend—or of the grave where we have buried our best beloved. First prayers, first lessons, first stories belonged to its archives, and all Sunday teachings ever since. The big old family bible with its quaint engravings, each one an indelible history, was kept there; and from the hour when they had stood on one footstool, or knelt on one chair with brotherly arms round each other's neck, to look at them and listen to their mother's reading out the narrative, they had loved and revered that book; one of them never wavered in his love and reverence for it. This room continued ever the brightest, distinctest spot in their early home. Under its window lay the garden, a place of delights; so old, green, and shady; on the outskirts so sunny, so flower-gaudy in front. The fold-yard was beyond, with his kine knee-deep in the golden straw, its rough mettlesome colts, sleek black pigs, and strutting poultry; the rick-yard adjoined, and there were few gayer rural sights to be seen any where than that balconied window presented on a dewy sunshiny morning, when the wagon, high piled with sacks of grain, was rolling heavily through the great gates, its team of four black horses in fringed scarlet trappings, and with musical bells at their collars chiming as they went.

## II.

Hitherto I have spoken of Mary Hawthorne in her past, and, so to say, *ideal*, relation, but now let me speak of the woman in her habit as she lived. She had an air of rusticity, though nature had gifted her with delicately refined features; these features, pallid and worn, with deeply sunken eyes under a brow like marble, could not but look remarkable; her countenance, that once attracted by its rosy maiden beauty, now fascinated by an intensity of suffering expression; but it will easily be understood that its charm for a *lover's* gaze was gone. Her dress was simple and homely, but graceful in its simplicity, showing that, while she had put by youth and gaiety, she could not put by the subtle perfume and *attrait* they leave behind. Sorrow had done for her the work of time, for though not yet thirty years old, broad silver lines streaked her luxuriant hair where the cap did not cover it, and the delicate veins of her thin hands shone distinctly through the white skin, and yet with all this subdued, refined tone of feature and color, her general air was still that of a woman of the class in which she had been born and bred. I would have this clearly felt and appreciated, because it goes to explain subsequent events.

She guided her father's household carefully and assiduously; she put her hand to many a task which is now servant's work without feeling it irksome; to and fro in the kitchen, to and fro in the dairy, to and fro in the poultry-yard, she went all day and every day; serviceable, energetic, thrifty, methodical in all her labors. *Methodical*, I have said—*mechanical* would have expressed more correctly the manner of her activity. One saw that in this life, which, as true wife and mother, would have satisfied every desire of her nature, her heart was not and never could be. For enjoyment she had got hard routine, for happiness she had got necessity, for daily sustenance of soul she had got duty. Left innocent in her natural estate, she would have shared some plain honest man's homely joys and homely cares, would have brought up his children in the fear of God, and would have died blessed and blessing others by her fair example. Cast adrift as she had been from a woman's only safe anchor, all her prayers, all her patience, fortitude, resignation, had been unable to stay her craving heart; she found

her feet set in a grove, and walked straight along it, looking upward for guidance and support; but that did not prevent that in the dead time of the night, in the soft evening, in the gleamy morning, old sights and sounds shall carry her thoughts away from the tame dull present to the bitter sweet of the past.

Mary Hawthorne's battle was to fight over again almost every day.

### III.

The day to which Mary had looked forward with greatest dread came upon her unawares at last. That evening, when her boys returned home after their rencontre with Sir Philip Nugent, she was sitting alone in her room, the window being open to the balcony, and the sun shining over the garden. She saw them enter by the wicket gate from the meadow, and, after pacing about for some minutes, throw themselves down on the grass, under the great walnut-tree. She had her Bible open on her lap, but she regarded the children, who were holding what seemed a very vehement argument; she saw that Cyrus was much excited, and that he would have broken away from his brother more than once, if Robert had not held him fast by main force. She had never accustomed herself, to interfere in their trifling fraternal differences, being of opinion that such righted themselves the more easily for being let alone; so the present scene would have passed unnoticed, had not something further occurred. Mr. Ford came in leisurely from the Parsonage lane, and no sooner did he appear than Cyrus sprang toward him, and began to question him with fiery eagerness. Robert stood by silent, but endeavoring by sign and gesture to restrain his brother, while he looked from time to time up at the balconied window, where he discerned the listening outline of his mother's figure.

Even from that distance, Mary could perceive that Cyrus's easily roused indignation was burning on lip and cheek, and that Robert looked strangely downcast and uneasy. The minister laid his hand solemnly on Cyrus's shoulder, and answered him. When Mary saw his grave earnest manner, and the sudden effect it had upon the impetuous lad, she understood what it meant, and, dropping on her knees, she hid her face in her hands and tried to pray.

Half an hour after, when Mr. Ford came into the room,

she was still in the same attitude—she had never once stirred since she sank down upon the floor. His step disturbed her, and she rose to her feet nervously, passing her hand before her eyes, to gain a little time, and stood holding by the table all white and dismayed. The good clergyman was touched by her look of plaintive distress.

"The time is come, Mary, for you and your children to understand each other fully," said he.

"Oh! how shall I tell them, Mr. Ford? If they despise their mother, I cannot survive it! How shall I tell them of their cruel shame?" cried she, trembling and weeping. All her courage, all her often rehearsals of this trying time, vanished in view of the reality.

"You have lived through fiercer trials than this, Mary; but the boys know the truth now. It seems that something has occurred to excite their suspicion; they did not tell me what, neither did I ask; but Cyrus demanded an explanation of me, and I gave it to spare you."

Mary looked as if she would have asked how they bore it, and he replied to her unspoken question.

"You must allow for Cyrus's proud spirit for a little while, but Robert is only anxious to show how much more he can love you. Oh! Mary, God has given you a treasure in that boy's heart."

"I know it, sir, I know it!" said she, sending a wild, mournful, pleading glance toward her other darling, who lay upon the grass alone, sullenly plucking the daisies and casting them away. With every idle fling of his hand he dealt a stab at his poor mother's swelling breast. She felt how anger, shame, and unutterable disappointment were dealing with him, and would have endured their pangs a thousand-fold to spare him one. Glancing upward to the balcony, he saw her white face watching him thus; he sprang to his feet, and fled indoors. She ran out upon the stairs to meet him; he came and flung himself upon her bosom, crying between his passionate sobs, "Oh, mother, mother, I do love you, I do love you!" as if he had been thinking of her unjustly, until he met her sad eyes upon him, and read in them a humble plea against her children's reproach. It was several minutes before she became conscious that Robert also was near her, with his arm twined round her waist. Mr. Ford had gone out and closed the door upon that pitiful scene; I think we will close the door upon it too.

## IV.

Mary's children had told her how and where they had seen their father, and when the lads were gone to their early rest she stood out upon the balcony gazing through the clear spring twilight at the little yacht in the bay whose frail spars were designed in sharp lines against the blue sky. "Why was it there?" she asked herself; and one moment there came into her cheeks a wavering blush, the next, sick and trembling, she was fain to support herself against the crazy balustrade with its flowery wreath.

Old Simon was in the garden smoking his evening pipe, and paying visits of inspection and admiration to the well-tended plots of flowers upon the lawn. He knew Mary was up in her room, and presently he called out to her—

"Mary, these double-stocks of yours are doing finely this year. Come and take a turn with me, if you are not over-busy."

She was a good daughter, and always obeyed her father's behests; without considering her own trial of the day or suffering it to keep her in solitude, she immediately joined him, and they continued to walk to and fro, until the old man's pipe was out and himself tired; then he went indoors and left her out upon the lawn. She had not said a word to him about the arrival of Sir Philip Nugent at Chinelyn, or of the revelation that had just been made to her children. It was a subject on which she would ever, if it were possible, have avoided speaking to him; they could not agree upon it; time had not lessened the bitterness of his resentment in any measure against his daughter's destroyer, or made him regard the two boys as any thing but visible signs of a dishonored name. His pride was quite as sensitive, quite as tenacious, as that of any born noble or gentleman in the land; yet in his practical spirit he looked to the boys' future as, in the main, depending upon him, and did his plain duty by them without ever learning to love them really.

When he left her in the garden, Mary strayed out through the wicket, into the sweet open meadows. There was a lovely lonely bank under the hedge of the wood, in whose moist hollows grew the treasures of yellow primroses, and lying along it was the decaying trunk of a gigantic elm which had recently been felled. She and the children were

in the habit of visiting this spot on summer Sunday evenings, and the same intense longing for quiet and repose drew her steps toward it now. No one would seek her there; in that solitude she could take her life into her hands and examine it where it was weak, guard it where it was exposed, above all, arm it against the subtle foe that lurked within the citadel. What is most women's salvation—their faithful love—was Mary's danger; she knew it and prayed against it. It is hopeless to try to explain what it made her suffer. It is wisest, when we can do it, to put away the past altogether; we have done with it in the way of action, we cannot improve it by way of thought. We have a future, at least we have a present, where effort need not be spent in vain, but it is sexton's work to linger moralizing perpetually amongst graves. If we have strength, close we that inevitable gate and go forth amongst the striving throng, to live and labor, to wait and pray. This was what Mary Hawthorne had endeavored and was still endeavoring to do, when her children told her what had happened to them upon the shore, when she learnt that their father was actually at Chincelyn, the sharpest thorn that had yet pierced her in mounting the hill Difficulty pricked her to the bone. What had brought him back if it were not the urging of that unsatisfied love that had been the bane of both—blinding him to honor, spotting her sweet innocence? How should she meet him—how repulse, when her own weak, passionate heart, even in his absence, pleaded for him so warmly? These were questions that she asked herself again and yet again as she rested on the fallen tree, and the evening grew dim and ever dimmer all around.

But help was preparing for her—such help and such safety as heaven oft-times gives to the weak in their own despite. Foresight is a melancholy gift; perhaps if Mary had foreseen the manner of her deliverance, it might have appeared crueller than any pang she had yet endured; in all sincerity she prayed, "Lead me not into temptation. Keep me from evil," and she was kept according to her desire—faithful if faint—and preserved against herself.

When she left the Manor gardens and strayed across the meadow, she did not perceive that she was watched, but Sir Philip Nugent had seen her while walking to and fro the lawn with her father, and he now followed her, carefully evading discovery by keeping under covert of the trees. He

and come to Chinelyn with an object; his wretched wife was dead, and he proposed to redeem past wrong and gain present happiness by marrying Mary. He had pleased his imagination with visions of her joyous beauty as he remembered it, of her youthful grace and simplicity, then capable of being moulded into any form; but what did he behold when he came stealthily under the Manor hedge and looked over at her in the garden? He beheld a woman separated from him in state and station by ten long years of almost menial work—a woman considerably older than her age, thin to emaciation, sorrowful almost to apathy. He was touched, but he was repelled: this poor faded Mary, to whose lips he had pressed the cup of all bitterness, never could be wife of his.

He was a man of the world; not altogether heartless, perhaps, but certainly selfish. He was not the Curtius to cast himself into that gulf which long separation had made between the habits of her life and his. To meet her again would be like making a new acquaintance, and might still further revolt his fastidious taste; but for her two beautiful boys he would provide. How glad, how proud would he have called either of them his lawful heir and bearer of his name, for no child had been born to him of his marriage: he had no son to carry down to posterity the talents and honors of his race. In this his pride was very fitly scourged; his early sin became his life-long, his irreparable mortification.

Mary sat upon the secluded bank until the moon rose and the heavy dews began to fall; Sir Philip Nugent, concealed in the wood behind, could see the outline of her figure so expressive of weariness and dejection, and when she moved to go home he followed her again. He saw her enter the garden and pass slowly round to the house door. Pausing upon the white moonlit steps, she lifted her pallid face toward heaven, and through the hushed stillness he heard a long quivering sigh breathed from her lips; for a moment he was minded to present himself before her and to turn her sorrow into a very joy of surprise, but while he hesitated, Mary went in, and the door closed behind her. Five minutes later, he was thankful that he had escaped the soft temptation of pity; and he went back to the village, secretly congratulating himself upon having been preserved from an act of tender foolishness which might have resulted in a pestering train of troublesome consequences to his life's end.

And Mary went up to her quiet room to gaze at the yacht



in the still, lake-like bay; it rested full in the track of the moonlight upon the water, and if it ever looked dim to her eyes that night it was that she beheld it through a mist of tears. When the morning came, she had not slept, and the traces of her vigil were seen in fevered cheek, slow, dull glance, and livid, sunken circles round her eyes. Poor Mary—poor faded rose! nothing but the lingering perfume of thy love can make thee lovely now!

## V.

That was a long, tedious day; she kept the boys at home, and expected from moment to moment that Sir Philip Nugent would appear at the Manor House as he told them he intended; but the hours wore on till evening, and he never came. At the turn of the tide she saw preparation astir on board of the yacht; its white sails were spread to the freshening breeze, its long scarlet pennon fluttered at the mast, and it glided out of the bay; slowly past Longridge white cliffs, slowly out of sight! Mary strained her gaze after it until she could see it no more; then she sank down upon the floor, her arm on the window ledge, and her throbbing head leant down upon it. It was surely too hard, too cruel to be true! Heaven could not mock her so cruelly!

The boys had also witnessed the departure of the yacht, and presently they went up to their mother's room; at the sound of their approach, with her habitual and mechanical self restraint in their presence, she had risen from her attitude of humiliation, and snatched her ordinary work with her needle. They seemed surprised to find her thus employed.

"The boat is gone, mother," said Cyrus, in a disappointed, half reproachful tone. "Our father *might* have kept his word."

Robert only stood by her chair, with his arm affectionately round her shoulders. She made no answer to Cyrus's remark, but after a few minutes of intolerable silence, she just turned her face to Robert's breast and began to cry, not loudly, not passionately, but with a weary abandonment as if her heart must either overflow or burst. Cyrus impetuously flung himself upon his knees, and with his head in her lap cried too, but Robert kissed her soft quivering lips

and reminded her—"Mother, you have Cyrus and me to love you," and with that she broke out into a repentant fit of passionate self accusal, saying that she needed this further chastisement, for her heart had been going astray from God. To her children she was almost a saint—they could not understand her; poor Mary knew, however, how far her hopes and imagination had gone back toward the love which could never more be any thing but deadly sin to her.

As Cyrus was the most violent in his sorrow, so it was the soonest exhausted, and by and by he was out in the balcony with a book, diverting his mind. It was from his position here that he presently saw Mr. Ford coming down the Parsonage lane toward the Manor House, and announced it to his mother.

"Go, Robin, and bring him up here; then leave us, my darlings, I must speak with him alone," said Mary, drying her swollen eyes.

Robert obeyed, and when he had ushered the clergyman into the room, he signed to his brother, and they went down stairs together.

"You are in bitter trouble, Mary; you have heard who was at Chinelyn last night?" said Mr. Ford, interrogatively.

"Yes, sir."

"I come to you as an ambassador from him now; we had a long interview this morning, and much talk on a very serious subject. He wishes to educate and provide for the boys; he saw them, as they have probably told you?"

"Yes." Mary looked vaguely at her clasped hands for several moments; she was scarcely equal to any effort of reflection then, but she asked at length—"Does he intend to take my children away from me?"

"He has not the power to do that; he has no authority whatever over them, Mary; so do not terrify yourself with imaginary dangers. He saw that the boys were fine intelligent fellows, and thinks—as you have often told me you thought yourself—that they are capable of higher things than Simon Hawthorne destines them to. But you know what my advice has always been?"

"That they should be kept in their present station, where mortification is less likely to assail them than in a higher position."

"Yes. I expressed my opinion freely to Sir Philip

Nugent, but he quite set it at nought. He has no other children, and would gladly bring up one or both of the boys to any profession they might select. He demanded that they should be taken into our counsels, and permitted to decide for themselves. I should be inclined to spare them that responsibility, were I in your place."

Mary roused herself and asked why? her own sentiments, the maternal love, pride, ambition leant toward giving the boys their own will in what must effect the whole course of their future lives. Mr. Ford perceived her bias, and reasoned against it as a man of his profession and mild, unassuming, conscientious, steadfast character, might be expected to do. He told her that Sir Philip Nugent was entirely a man of the world; that he had no religious principles, and consequently no real liability of conduct, as his acts but too well proved; he told her that her children, in being trained under his auspices, would imbibe his dangerous views, and be ultimately separated from her by the broadest barrier which can divide parents from their children—inequality and diversity of mind and manners. Mary knew ~~not~~ how wide this barrier is, knew how effectually it had but just operated against herself.

"I do not think my boys would ever cease to love me," said she, with touching humility; "I dare not deal untruly with them, Mr. Ford, let the consequences be what they may. We must tell them what their father has offered them."

"It is not dealing untruly, Mary, to keep poison from those who cannot discriminate between it and wholesome food," replied Mr. Ford, with sermonie air and illustration. "You are justified, certainly, in hiding poison out of the way of a child."

Mary had great respect for her pastor, but she had still greater respect for the free-will of her boys; she was not convinced by the force of his reasoning in the smallest measure. She would have been pleased to see her children educated, and taking their places in the world like gentlemen. She felt in her fine woman's nature, that their strain of mind and temper was of their father's class rather than of hers; and that for Cyrus, at least, there would never be happiness, never be contentment, in a lowly station.

"I pledged my word to Sir Philip Nugent that I would faithfully lay his offer before you, Mary, and I have done

so," said Mr. Ford. "I am sorry to see the favor with which you are disposed to receive it, and I hope you will consult your father before accepting it."

"I will. But oh, sir! you do not know Cyrus, you do not understand what a beautiful mind he has," pleaded Mary. "If he were taught in the schools, he might be made a true poet. I could show you some of his pieces now——"

"*Poeta nascitur non fit*," replied the parson, and then translated the phrase for Mary's unlearned comprehension.

"But he has *genius*, sir. Master Scrope, who has seen great varieties of life in many parts of the world, says that Cyrus has *true genius*."

"That the lad has a fine and fluent fancy, Mary, I cannot deny."

Mary interrupted the minister with jealous motherly haste.

"Well, then, Mr. Ford, if he gets a learned education, will not that bring his talent, which God has given him, to a more profitable use?" Genius is not needed to sow corn, shear sheep, or plough in the furrow. Its work is other than that—altogether nobler and higher."

"A young man makes none the worse farmer for having a good head-piece," replied the parson, laconically.

"That is all very true, sir; but you do not take a finely tempered razor to mow the grass; a strong scythe mows it better, and the razor would be spoilt over the coarse work."

The learned gentleman thought that Mary did not reason amiss, considering her opportunities, and he paid her an old-fashioned compliment to that effect, adding that Cyrus had his best wit from her.

"No, Mr. Ford, no!" cried she, eagerly; "Cyrus has nothing of the Hawthornes about him; he might not belong to us, and that is why I think more of having a higher way in the world opened for him than I do for Robert. Robert is patient; he takes things more easily than his brother; he is happier in his temper and more contented. Now, Cyrus chafes already against his grandfather's restraint."

"Robert is a good boy, and he will grow up into a good man. If either of the lads must go to Sir Philip Nugent, I should send him as the one least likely to suffer from the transplantation."

"I am not anxious for Robert, he has never given me an uneasy hour since he was born; but I am anxious for Cyrus."

"The more need, then, to keep him under your own watchful guardianship."

"I could not keep him long, sir; it is but a few days ago that he said to me, in his thoughtless way, 'Mother, I would rather cast myself on the world with a staff and a tramp's wallet, than stagnate all the days of my life at Chinelyn.'"

"I am afraid the lad is very far gone in romance, indeed," replied the parson, with a shake of his reverend head. "A staff and a tramp's wallet indeed! Master Scrope is not the most judicious friend in the world for a boy of his temper."

"And Cyrus thinks he is the best friend he has."

"The most entertaining, perhaps, with his stories of plays and play-actors, but far from the *best*. An unsettled character like Master Scrope, is never a safe companion for youth, but youth, being amused, is not likely to regard that. It would not astonish or trouble me to hear any day that Master Scrope had betaken himself to the staff and the tramp's wallet, but I should be grieved indeed to find that Cyrus had followed his example."

"We must not let him feel himself a prisoner then, sir. He will never thrive in bonds."

"Mary, let the matter lie dormant for a single week. Watch the lad for symptoms of revolt; let him quietly develop any new ideas the event of yesterday may have put into his mind, and be guided accordingly."

Mary promised that she would.

"It will be at once the wisest and the safest plan. I will converse with the boy myself, and make a point of sounding his capabilities and inclinations. You know, Mary, that young people are apt to mistake a fancy for a vocation, and only to discover their blunder when it is too late. If Cyrus really loathe the idea of being a farmer, it would be wrong to condemn him to a life where he could only find his consolation in low and degrading pleasures; but if he do not, then it seems to me more free and independent than any other—plenty of leisure to read, plenty of pastoral themes to sonnetize about."

"Ah! sir, you do not understand Cyrus. There are thoughts in his mind we none of us can sound."

Perhaps the good clergyman was slightly piqued, or perhaps he considered it useless to discuss the theme with the partial mother of the young genius any longer; for after a few feeling words of advice and comfort, he took his depar-

ture, desiring that Cyrus and Robert both should come up to the Parsonage after morning school on the morrow.

The two boys watched Mr. Ford away, and then they returned to their mother's room. Cyrus was evidently wishful to know what the lengthy discussion in their absence had been about, but, agreeably to her promise, Mary avoided the subject, and when he came caressing round her, as his custom was when he wanted to gain any favor or intelligence, she asked him to give her the little red pocket-book that she might see what he had been writing lately. He complied, and Mary was reading his composition of the day before for only the third time, when old Simon Hawthorne's voice was heard calling from below—

"Cyrus, are you in your mother's room? If you are, come away with me to the Manor Butts to see after the sheep."

"I hate this farming worse than ever, mother!" cried the lad, angrily, but at a few quiet words from her he went down stairs and joined his grandfather.

She had not been able to deny herself the indulgence of telling him that perhaps he might ere long be delivered from his ignoble destiny, and that was a pleasant new cud of reflection for him to chew.

## VI.

Mr. Ford was an admirable parish priest, mild in manner, but in principle unflinching, not acute in discerning the minute traits of character, and not deeply versed in the wisdom of this world, but eager, untiring, enthusiastic in his holy calling; a man whom every body loved and most people respected—not *all*. There were a crafty few at Chinelyn, as elsewhere, who, having imposed on his simplicity, despised him for his very virtue of unsuspectingness. He was a Nathaniel in whom was no guile. His countenance was good; when he warmed up in the pulpit, it became noble. His wife, herself a most gentle, kindly woman, said he was a saint upon earth. Nobody could know the parson and his delicate helpmate without being the better for it. Even Mark Brett, one of the wildest and most incorrigible characters in the village, was once heard to

say that it was rank blasphemy to utter a word that could hurt the feelings of Parson Ford and his wife.

It was always a pleasure to the Hawthorne boys to go up to the Parsonage, buried alive in trees and shrubs; for Mrs. Ford, who had no children of her own, liked them and treated them without formality; claiming little services at their hands such as most boys like to render to a pretty, gentle voiced lady. She was busy amongst her flowers when they went into the grounds, attired in homely gown and still more homely headgear, but it was out of the power of unfashionable attire to eclipse the sunshine of her looks and ways. As soon as she saw the boys she dropped her garden-rake and met them with a hand for each, and a smile behind which you scarcely discerned the lines physical suffering had drawn upon her face or the thickly sown, white hairs in her dark braids: she had a good and happy countenance, to which all good hearts warmed naturally.

"Let me rake that plot for you, Mrs. Ford, will you?" said Robert, picking up the garden tool.

The boys were not aware of any special object in their present visit: their mother had told them to go up to the Parsonage as they returned from school—that was all.

"Yes, Robert, I shall be glad of your help, and Cyrus, I must show you how beautifully that red rose is growing that you nailed up for me over the study window;" and having led him in that direction the parson's wife rapped on the glass asking, "Henry are you there? Cyrus and Robert Hawthorne are with me; can you come out?" and forth Mr. Ford issued with a straw hat on his head, and a lean, stiff-haired terrier, famous against rats, at his heels—the parson's barns were infested with rats, otherwise, I think his natural taste in pets would have inclined him to a stately paced black cat rather than to this ugly mongrel cur, which, however, had honest points of its own not altogether unworthy of study.

By degrees the conversation, desultory at first, became more serious, and edged away from garden flowers to field grasses, to the springing crops and the young stock. The parson had a gentle way of leading imperceptibly up to any subject which he wished to bring under the consideration of persons whose views were unknown to him—a way which in some men might have seemed jesuitical, but which in him arose out of a simple kindness of heart ever desirous to avoid offence; and thus the boys were drawn unconsciously

into expressing many feelings and sentiments which they had hitherto only avowed to each other.

"You ought to begin to look on agriculture with great interest now since you are destined to be a farmer, Cyrus," said Mr. Ford.

Cyrus colored and replied emphatically, "But I never shall be a farmer, sir."

"Then we must keep Robert at the Manor House," said Mrs. Ford. Chinelyn cannot afford to lose both you young Hawthornes."

"Why do you dislike the idea of being a farmer, Cyrus? I should have thought it was a quiet independent sort of existence such as would suit your fancy; all poets and romancers extol the pastoral life," observed the parson.

"How many of them *lived* it, sir?" retorted Cyrus. "I think it was often distance that lent enchantment to their view."

"That is the glamour which is deceiving yourself with regard to the world, Cyrus. You will be glad to return to us some day."

"Perhaps so, sir. Master Scrope likes country quiet now that he is old, but when he was young he wandered about and saw many manners and many men. He is very pleasant to listen to, and I think he is happier within himself than he would have been if he had stayed in a rural solitude, where the human mind rusts for want of use."

"You are quoting Master Scrope's own words. I think, however, Cyrus, that if he had stayed in that rural seclusion he would have escaped many a sin, and would have had a clearer conscience to repose on in his latter days."

"He is a good old man, Mr. Ford."

"How do you know *that*, Cyrus? From what premises do you argue that Master Scrope is a good man?"

"He goes to church—he reads his Bible."

"He goes to church for decency's sake—he reads his Bible, but he does not believe it to be the inspired word of God. At best he is but a respectable heathen—neither guide nor model for you, Cyrus, let him be amusing as he may."

"How is it, sir, that the people send their children to him to be taught, he being what you say?" asked Robert, suddenly.

"He has kept his opinions to himself; until very recently I did not suspect them myself; ever since I have urged him



to resign his office, and follow any other employment rather than that of an instructor of youth."

"I am very sorry for poor Master Scrope, Henry, and I do hope he will not leave Chinelyn," said Mrs. Ford, gently; "if we are patient and pray for him we may be permitted to do him good. He was much knocked about when he was young, and misfortunes brought him into bad company; but there is something very kind and genuine about him. He said once, you know, that he would be a Christian if he could."

"Master Scrope is not our question now: let us go back to Cyrus," replied Mr. Ford. "What do you propose to do if you leave us?"

"I should like my grandfather to send me to school somewhere; if he will not do that, I mean to go to sea."

"Very explicit! And have you any independent views for yourself, Robert?"

"No, I am content to stay at Chinelyn until the time comes for me to go to Uncle Joshua at Walton Minster. I have never thought of any thing else as possible. Perhaps if it had been settled at first for me to stay on at the farm I might have preferred that to varnish-making, but I know grandfather would never hear of any change now—besides, Uncle Joshua would be offended."

"And he is a rich man," added Cyrus, complacently. "As Robin has no objection, it will be a grand provision for him."

"We shall see you mayor of Walton some day, Robert," said Mrs. Ford, with her pleasant smile; "but what will become of *you*, discontented boy?" she asked, turning to Cyrus, who was looking remarkably bright and audacious.

"Send me out into the world to seek my fortune!" replied he, laughing.

"First let us get you armed for the fight; it will not do to plunge empty-handed and bare-headed into that contest," said the parson's wife. "Let us see you put on discretion as well as valor, and faith in God as well as trust in yourself. How happy he looks, Henry!" She had approached the boy, and laid her fair frail hand on his shoulder, gazing earnestly into his beautiful face.

"I think my mother has some idea in her head for me, for she whispered last night that ere long perhaps I might be set free from what she knows I dislike," replied the boy, blushing

confusedly, when he remembered what the way of that deliverance would probably be.

Mr. Ford made a private mental comment on the reticence of women in general and of Mary Hawthorne in particular, and then with a leisurely step returned to his study. He had accomplished his self-imposed task of sounding Cyrus, and had come to the conclusion, that whatever might befall him away from Chinelyn, nothing but mischief and distress were likely to result from keeping him there.

"We can but hope and pray that whatever is, may be for the best," he soliloquized with pious philosophy; "the matter seems to be ruled and directed by a stronger hand than ours."

## VII.

When Simon Hawthorne was first made acquainted with Sir Philip Nugent's proposal about the boys, he was extremely angry, and would not listen to it; he said he was well able to provide for them himself, that their unnatural and wicked father had no right over them, and should not interfere. Mary thought she would have been obliged to give the matter up; but there was Cyrus urging her on the other hand; perhaps he urged her sometimes a little too vehemently, a little too selfishly—it was his character. At length Mr. Ford, rather against his inclination, was persuaded to act as mediator, and the old man was then induced to listen to reason. But he, like the parson, and for the same reasons, was more inclined to part with Robert than with Cyrus; besides his preference, if preference he had, inclined toward Cyrus rather than his brother; and yet another thing—Sir Philip Nugent had said that, if any difficulty were raised about giving up both the boys to his care, he would choose Robert of the two. Poor Mary saw that this conclusion left the real difficulty untouched, and told her children that the straightest means of solving it was for each to proclaim his own wishes.

"Very well," replied Cyrus, readily enough; "I say, once for all, that I will never be a farmer, and that I will not stay in Chinelyn to stagnate a single day longer than I can help."

"And I say," subjoined Robert, "that I will remain a

Hawthorne as long as I live, and follow Uncle Joshua's business as grandfather decided long since."

They were a perverse pair, the old man said, and perhaps he might have persisted in bending the twigs the way they would *not* grow, had not Mary shown him some of Cyrus's poetical effusions, and given up a whole evening to the hard task of convincing him that the boy's genius was a great gift which ought not to be wilfully choked by ignorance, or hidden in obscurity. The old man had the profoundest contempt for geniuses; there had been one in the family before, and he was its greatest disgrace—a licentious, wasteful, irreligious profligate—he told his daughter; if Cyrus were going to turn out like *him*, it was little matter when or where he went.

Of course, Mary argued that Cyrus would be an honor to them, and never any thing else; he had a good heart and good principles, therefore he was safe from low temptations, and loving her he would never break her heart by forgetting the right, and yielding to the wrong. Surely there is no love so confident in the fidelity and strength of its idol as maternal love! The difficulty was at last arranged. Sir Philip Nugent and Mr. Ford had exchanged several letters, and had come to an arrangement; nothing remained to be settled but the time and manner of Cyrus's departure. That also was decided upon; Sir Philip was with his yacht at Cowes; he would come round to Chinelyn about the middle of June, three weeks hence, and take him away. Mary received this announcement with a wonderful degree of self-command; but there was infinitely more pathos in her silence than there could have been in the most obtrusive sorrow: she firmly believed that she was acting for her darling's good, and in such a view personal sacrifice is met with alacrity by a mother.

The interval was one long preparation for the parting that was to come, and Cyrus made it all the harder by the way in which he followed his mother about, and clung to her at every instant. Even old Simon, who had never feigned any great affection for him, was touched, and said, "Better change thy mind, Cyr, and stay at home," but mother and son both negatived this proposition. "Well," added the old man, "if thee and thy father fall out, which with thy temper is not unlikely, then thee can come back to us."

"Cyr will learn to control his temper for his mother's

sake, and for his own too," replied Mary, fondly kissing her darling, and Cyr, full of a boy's good resolutions, promised that he would.

Of course, the lad was dispensed from attendance at school, and Master Scrope saw little of him. The old man evidently missed his favorite; he became restless and absent at lessons, and when the short holiday for the hay harvest began, his cottage was one morning observed to be shut up. The key was in the door, the plain old furniture was in its place, the clock in the corner was ticking still, but the cupboard and the book-shelves were bare, and the schoolmaster was absent without leave.

"I should have been very sorry if I had not been going away myself," said Cyrus; "I hope the poor old fellow will come to no harm."

Robert regretted the master much more deeply than his brother did, and for some days he hoped to see him return; but, the holiday terminated, he did not reappear, and Mr. Ford appointed his successor; a decently educated, orthodox principled young man, who would never foster any rustic genius, or shock any prejudice whatever.

On the Sunday evening before Cyrus was to leave her, Mary said to Robert as they came out of the church, "Robin, go home with your grandfather to-night, and leave me and your brother to take our walk alone;" and they turned together through a little wood that skirted the church-yard, and so up through the fields and over the down.

Cyrus always remembered how, during that last walk with his mother, in the still Sabbath twilight, they came to a gate overlooking the broken ground that goes down to Winchcome Chine. Before them was the sea, in summer calm, the moon rising faintly over it, the foreground cast into masses of shadow by clumps of trees and furze; a few white sheep and some cattle feeding amongst them on the short tender grass, an old shepherd, with his watch-dog, passing down to the farm in the hollow. He had seen the same picture in all its details over and over again, but it was with the faint pure haze in the sky, and the Sabbath silence around, and the tender melancholy of farewell pervading it all, that he bore it in his memory from that hour. Perhaps, too, there were his mother's gentle counsels and gentler pleadings that he would love her always; that he would not let time or luxury lessen his tenderness for her or for his

brother ; and, above all, that in days of trial, temptation, and sorrow, he would not forget God whom she had taught him to love and honor in his childhood. When they had talked of all these things, they returned home along the top of the cliffs ; Mary rather faint and weary, glad even of the support of the boy's arm ; Cyrus exalted with the sense of coming freedom, and, as he interpreted the change, of coming happiness.

### VIII.

A pelting thunder rain dimpled the dark breast of the sea, as Mary Hawthorne and her two boys made their way through the Chine to the shore. Old Simon and Mr. Ford were following silently behind—all hearts were very full over this parting. Cyrus held his mother's hand with a convulsive pressure—had he a presentiment that he held it for the last time ? that this hurried walk under the trees, that shed upon them tear-like showers, was the very last in which their footsteps would chime so lovingly together ?

Mary did not try to veil her grief under a mask of smiles or composure. Ever as they went the tears rolled down her cheeks, and Cyrus kept saying, in his fresh young voice, half tremulous too,

“ Don't cry, mother ; oh, mother, don't cry so sadly ! ”

Mark Brett and his father, who saw them pass, came down after them upon the shore. The tide was low, but the boat from the yacht had got near in, and two sailors were there waiting. About a quarter of a mile out lay the yacht itself, with a solitary figure pacing to and fro upon the deck. Nobody, not even Mary, took any heed to him. The appearance of the sorrowful little group arrested his march, and he stood to watch it. It was no mere fancy of his that he heard a woman's wailing voice, loud and uncontrollable ; it was Mary's voice, and its echo awoke in his mind a spasm of remorse. When Cyrus was in the boat and it was being pushed off into deep water by the fisherman, he saw her stretching out her hands after it, as if to call him back ; but when the rowers bent to their oars and it shot swiftly toward the yacht, then her arms dropped. The severance was accomplished, and her darling gone from her for ever.

Those on the shore saw Cyrus wave his cap as he stepped

upon the deck of the yacht; there was something gay and triumphant in the action, and Robert took off his, and waved it in return; then old Simon, then Mr. Ford, did the same.

"Mother, darling, wave your handkerchief that Cyr may see you," cried Robert, eagerly; and with an effort she obeyed.

As the elder Brett passed them in going up to his home he stopped to speak to Mary, and to wish her boy good luck, but Mark went by sullenly and without a word. Meanwhile the rain rained on, and the sea-mist rolling in, gradually wrapped the yacht from their view. Mr. Ford and Simon then returned to the village, but Mary and Robert still lingered on the beach.

"If the fog would only lift for a moment that I might see him *once* more!" sobbed Mary.

Robert said perhaps it would, and they would wait. So they waited, sheltering under the edge of a fishing-boat that was drawn up upon the sands, until the returning tide flowed nearly to their feet; being obliged to move, they then turned their slow steps toward the Chine. When they had mounted a little way, they paused to look back; the rain had not ceased, but the atmosphere was clearer. Over the white cliffs there was no storm at all.

"Mother, look! there she goes," exclaimed Robert, suddenly, pointing to the yacht, which was coming out of the mist with her sails set.

"And the sunlight just touches her pennon! Oh, Robin, I will have a good hope for your brother!" replied Mary, more cheerfully than she had spoken for days.

The curtain of mist held off until the yacht, rounding the point, disappeared from their view; then they went wearily home, talking of him that was gone with that partial tenderness which in absence magnifies every virtue and ignores every fault. You would have thought, to hear the loving pair, that Cyrus was an angel lent to earth for a brief space to accomplish some high and holy mission, and then be seen no more.

"If he should ever become a great poet like Milton, or a writer of plays like Shakspeare, shouldn't we be proud of him then, mother?" says Robert, who has a most enthusiastic and exalted faith in his brother's capabilities.

"I hope he will use the talents God has given him for

God's service," replied Mary, unconsciously quoting Parson Ford.

"Of course he would," Robert answered, and when the two reached home they were both a little comforted.

## IX.

A great event at the Manor Farm was this departure of Cyrus, yet great as it was, it made no cessation in the quiet daily routine of the life there lived. Mary wondered sometimes, and paused in the midst of some household task to inquire of herself, if it were really true that he was gone away from her, and that she had given him up out of her own hands into his father's forever?

It *was* true. For the first week or fortnight she supported his absence with what might have seemed to some an apathetic indifference, though there was in her countenance that painful raising of the brow, that lustreless languor about the eyes, that grave depression of the lips, which betrayed the constant presence of a repining thought. Still she went about her duties with a steady precision; still she interested herself in how many pounds of butter weekly the dairy yielded, and what was the daily contribution to the milk-pail of Dimple, Dapple, and Soft-eyes, her favorite Alderney cows. The motherly hens ran at her call just as cheerfully as they used to run when she was a merry little maiden; old Woodman, her father's white pony, followed her in the field; and Watch, the faithful sheep-dog, came fawning to her feet as affectionately as ever. Nothing of all these things was changed, but only Mary herself.

"The sun shines just as brightly and the air is as balmy as it used to be," she thought, "but they do not seem the same to me. The sun does not warm me, and the breeze does not strengthen, as they did once. I think it is that I have no more hope."

There was the proud feminine instinct in Mary which always tells a woman when her power is utterly at an end. There had been, unacknowledged even to herself, some vague looking toward a future which might restore to her her early love—a re-union however distant—forgiveness and peace. But now she knew that the gulf between the past and the present would never more be closed or bridged over; per-

haps, also, she had divined why. But the disappointment brought with it no bitterness—she was above that now. She accepted her fate patiently; plodded through the tame routine of her daily life, and was more than ever thoughtful for Robert and her father; but, even while wishing for their sakes to live, the springs of life dried slowly within her, under the fever heat of an incurable wound. She was assailed by frequent faintings, by a deplorable weakness, and they increased upon her fast.

“A creaking gate hangs long, Mary,” Mrs. Ford one day remarked to her in proverbial reference to her own ill-health. “I am better one day and worse another, but how are you? It appears to me that you are not taking care of yourself.”

“Mrs. Ford, I believe I am dying; I have thought so a long time, and now I am sure of it,” was Mary’s quiet reply.

“Mary, you shock me! What has put such an idea into your head? I see no reason for such a painful fear.”

“It is not so very painful to me; except for my father and the boys, it is not painful at all, for I am weary of my life!”

“Mary, it makes me very sad to hear you speak thus,” and the good woman clasped Mary’s poor thin hand in both hers, and gazed affectionately into her face. “Talk to me as if I were your sister; tell me what you feel; perhaps I can do you good.”

“I do not suffer pain, but I have a deadly weakness; sometimes it seems as, if I did not make an effort and will to live a little longer, my eyes would close and my breath go from me without a pang.”

“Mary, are you grieving after Cyrus?”

“No, it is not that. I think I am more and more content every day that he is gone. He is happier with his father than here. He says so in his letters.”

“But I cannot bear to see you give yourself up in this way. Dr. Willis must come and talk you out of your fancy. Henry shall send you some of his good port-wine, and you must promise me to drink it every day, will you?”

Mary promised, but the parson’s good port wine put no strength into her frame, and though Dr. Willis came and talked to her, he, and not she, was the convert. The experienced physician acknowledged that she was past his skill—he could not—no earthly medicament could—heal a broken heart.

It was of that old disease that Mary Hawthorne died.



## X.

The wind comes sobbing at the lattice of Mary Hawthorne's room as the autumn reddens over the woods; she is not in the balcony any more where the crimson rose opens its heart to the morning sun; she is not in the old nursing chair plying her swift needle or reading her Bible; she is not to and fro in the house with careful hand and thoughtful eye, or in the shady garden tending her flowers. She is not on the steps watching to welcome her boys home from school—alas, there are no boys there to welcome any more! Mary has departed to the house appointed for all living. Her day—its work, pain, and patience—are ended, and she is taking her rest in the green graveyard that slopes seaward on Arbon Cliff's.

Upon the headstone is this simple inscription :

"MARY HAWTHORNE,

Died August the Fifth, 1809,

Aged Thirty Years.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

Occasionally there comes a rough down-looking man along the steep lane that skirts the churchyard where she lies, who whispers softly to himself as he stops to look over the fence, "There is poor Mary's grave."

Mark Brett remembers her when they were an innocent pair and sat side by side on the same bench like little lovers at the dame-school. Perhaps her most enduring memorial is in that man's heart.

The Manor House is very strange without her, though the same regular course as went on under her, goes on still under a comely presiding housekeeper, who is already in imagination house-mistress. Cyrus, who was summoned to receive his mother's blessing, and arrived only in time to see her buried, has gone back to his father, and even Robert is away to Walton Minster. 'Tis easy to see that a new *regimé* has been initiated at the Farm, and the former one is past away

forever. Mary's room is shut up, and the sunshine hardly enters at the sullied glass, but what matter? None who loved it are there now to be hurt by neglect. Old Simon Hawthorne comes of a race of philosophers whom the course of time and nature easily consoled.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

AT MESSRS. HAWTHORNE AND CO'S.

"With devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself."

SHAKESPEARE

## I

FIFTY years ago Walton Minster was, to all outward appearance, exactly the same as it is to-day, namely, a drowsy little city with a well-preserved cathedral church, a large market-place having an ancient stone cross in the midst, and a network of confused, narrow streets and lanes radiating from it. The aristocracy of the town rallied round about the Minster, where steep gardens clustered green and shady under its walls, hiding from profane view the ecclesiastical retirement of dean and canons and the statelier abodes of a few remnants of old families, who still clung to the dim city houses with which their names were inseparably blent. It was edifying to behold these blue-blooded patricians erecting their heads above the common herd, and, if their monuments spake true, succumbing haughtily to the common lot. That the Leighs, Nugents, Mauleverers, Langdales, Howards, Percys, Fairfaxes could die—die, and go to dust like the plebeians who ministered to their base physical needs—was a humiliating proof that the great scheme of humanity had been formed on democratic principles without any special view to them. There are more epitaphs than one left yet upon the hoary Minster walls, that seem to protest against this leveling conclusion to mortal grandeur at which modern sanctity glances aside with pharisaical reprehension: these dead men thank God from their tombstones that they lived virtuous lives, were kept in great honor and prosperity, and never evened with other sinners until death deplumed them

of their distinctions and laid them in the dust; and we thank God with our lips that we live in such pious times when the dark ages of our ancestors are past, and an illumination of private lights is blinking insolently in the eyes of the sun. Which is the better?—this or that. The darkness, or the Will-o'-the-wisps abroad in the daytime?

Close beside the market-cross, and giving that gray relic a picturesque beauty of light and shadow through their bowery branches, were three glorious oaks, which tradition said were older than the town itself—sons indeed of the primeval forest that once clothed all the romantic valley of the Gled. The country-folks grouped round their enormous boles with their baskets of butter and eggs, fruit and vegetables, the old women wearing red-hooded cloaks and the young ones broad straw hats, made a lively scene under their grateful shelter on fine summer Saturdays; these holdings were the high places of the market, and thither wended all prudent housewives, secure of finding there the best rural produce for their money. There was one ancient dame, Nanny Briget, as well-known as the cross itself, who never failed to inform new customers—such, for instance, as a young matron fresh to the town, or a gentleman's recently engaged housekeeper—that first and last she had sat under the same branch of the same tree every Saturday from ten till two for “better than fifty year,” without missing once in all that time to any body's knowledge.

At one side of the square was the Town Hall, and ranging from it all round the place were the dwellings of the more substantial shop-keepers. The professional men hung about the purlieus of the Minster, neither quite accepted nor quite rejected of its hereditary denizens, and a few old-fashioned respectables still stayed faithfully by the obscure and narrow streets where their progenitors had lived and labored.

Of this latter class were Messrs. Hawthorne and Co., the Co. being embodied in the sole person of Mr. Reuben Otley, whose manufacturing premises were in the rear of their houses, which adjoined each other, and looked out upon one of the narrowest, ugliest, dreariest streets in all Walton Minster.

The partners were both bachelors, and both elderly men, with each a housekeeper of grave repute; and it was to the home of one, and the careful supervision of both, that Robert Hawthorne found himself transferred in something less

than a month after his mother's death. The change to him from the sweet flowery island to the dull sordid streets of a northern provincial town, was great indeed, and it is no exaggeration to say that, for a time, he loathed the place and all in it. The grandeur of the old Minster church scarcely impressed him; he had neither antiquarian nor historical lore to embellish it with poetical associations, nor an imagination vivid enough to realize its past. The bit of the town that pleased him most was the market-day bustle round the cross, though, to his unaccustomed ears, the harsh voices of the chaffering women were a drawback even there. Those who in a foreign land have experienced that sad heart-craving which we call home-sickness, may imagine what Robert Hawthorne felt when he was thus cast adrift from all beloved and familiar things, and exiled amidst the strange faces and strange ways of Walton Minster. He might look forward to no return—no pleasant periodical holiday-time; he had changed his country for good and all, and belonged henceforward through life till death to the firm of Hawthorne and Co.

## II.

Finding that his young relative was already a fair reader, writer, and accountant, Mr. Joshua Hawthorne thought it fit to dispense with any further schooling, and exalted him at once to a stool in the clerk's office, where Robert was the youngest among six apprentices. A dingy place this office was, dark by nature, but darker still by art; a thick green curtain being stretched across the lower panes of the smoky windows, to exclude all view of the street; a precaution against youthful idling which might have been safely laid aside, for there was literally nothing to be seen, except relays of children making dust-heaps or mud-pies, according as the weather permitted. Upon the walls were stretched two or three discolored maps, and in conspicuous places, over the chimney-piece, on the panels of the door, and elsewhere, were wafered up little dark blue papers, with moral maxims printed on them in letters of gold—maxims exaltative of honesty, diligence, sobriety, discretion, punctuality, and other minor virtues, essential to the success of men in trade. To Robert's ingenuous mind these maxims sounded beautiful, and he experienced a grave shock when he heard

how wittily the apprentice vivacity could parody them; he was a modest lad, fresh from the pure atmosphere of home, and blushed at a coarse or irreverent saying like any girl.

Mr. Reuben Otley, as might be expected from a man who ornamented his apprentices' room with trite moral sentences, was a person harsh and stern in aspect and in practice a rigid disciplinarian. He was not so much disliked as he was feared; a glance from his eye was warning enough to any dilatory youngster; he was obeyed at a word, and he made it to be understood that his rules were as the laws of the Medes and Persians which altered not. He was well served, as a matter of course, and though the lads in his absence dared to laugh at and travesty his wise saws, yet in his presence it was who could be most emulous to put them in action. It was his boast that never since he entered the firm of Hawthorne and Co. had clerk or workman been discharged for dishonesty, idleness, or insubordination, and that his apprentices had all turned out diligent and successful men of business. There was some truth in this. Mr. Reuben Otley understood well the science of government, and impressed those under him with an assurance that the slightest breach of discipline, truth, or honesty, would draw down upon the delinquent the fullest weight of his vengeance. One favorite saying of his was this: "It is a capital crime against social order to pardon the smallest error;" and from time to time he would take occasion to deliver a sort of warning of judgment to the people in his employ, when some event had happened in the town sufficiently flagrant to point the moral.

Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, though nominally the head of the firm, took a less active part in the conduct of its business than Mr. Reuben Otley. He was a fine portly old gentleman, with enough resemblance to his elder brother Simon to mark their close family relationship; but commerce with the world had given him a more enlarged mind, and a natural benignity of temper made his manners suave and gracious. Perhaps his watchful mildness, consideration and help, did quite as much toward preserving the balance of duty amongst their servants as the stricter rule of his co-partner; at all events they liked him better.

The confidential clerk and overseer of the works, Mr. Constant, familiarly styled "Conny," was a smart dapper little personage, soft and slow in manner and gently com-

plimentary toward the weaker sex, though he had never paid it the highest compliment of selecting from its fair files a helpmate for life. He was suspected of employing his bachelor leisure in the composition of the sentimental verses which embellished the poet's corner of the *Walton Courant*; and in consequence, some of the apprentices, who were of a romantic turn, greatly admired and tried to imitate him in his dress and graceful airs. Robert Hawthorne once showed some of his brothers rhymes to the poetical clerk, and had the prime satisfaction of learning that he, Conny, thought they would be very pretty, if they were only a little more polished, and Robert, much pleased with approbation from such a high quarter, wrote off his opinion to Cyrus that very day. I know not whether Cyrus appreciated it at its true value; he had not the personal acquaintance of Conny, and perhaps failed in discerning what an important personage he was in his own community, for Conny was one of those eminently successful men who succeed in imposing their own self estimate on all with whom they come in contact. Except amongst adepts, a shining lacquer has a tolerable chance of passing for fine gold.

Amongst Robert's companions of the desk there was a diversity of manners as well as of gifts. The three eldest—Rees, Lovat, and Brewster—were nearly all out of ~~there~~ time; John Otley had still three years to serve, and Sancton had but just entered on his indentures. Otley, as nephew of one of the partners, and his future successor in the firm, held himself very loftily; he was a rather weak-minded youth in reality, though his strong passions had hitherto been regarded as signs of a strong character, and had a most exasperating air of condescension and patronage toward his juniors. Robert Hawthorne, during the first week of their acquaintance, was irresistibly provoked by his assumption to laugh in his face, and then sturdily to set his authority aside, an act of rebellion which caused Otley to conceive for him a cold, malignant, jealous hatred which only lacked opportunity to develope itself. George Sancton was a lively, good-humored boy of fourteen, with neither much talent nor much love of work, but he was a favorite in the office, and enjoyed some privileges as being the orphan son of a clerk who had met his death accidentally while engaged in the performance of his duty. George had a sister, Dorothea, who was five years older than himself, and the pair lived

with Miss Kibblewhite, a maiden sister of their mother's, who supported herself and them by keeping a small tea and coffee shop in the market-place.

One more of Robert's new associates must be introduced by name, and then the narrative shall proceed. Old Tom Aldin was a man half crippled with rheumatism, with ragged white hair and beard, and an aspect unsavory in the extreme: the only spark of lightness or brightness about him was his eye, which glittered from under a shaggy, overhanging brow, as keenly as a hawk's. He was the most highly paid workman on the premises, for it was his office to watch the simmering of a valuable kind of varnish, and at the culminating point to turn it off the fire; a minute's neglect or carelessness, and the whole *brew* was spoiled. This task was carried on in a small walled court, half roofed over, where he sat by the seething pot, silently moving his lips and watching the dark mass like some ancient alchemist muttering his spells, and waiting for the grand projection, which was to confer upon him the Midas gift of turning base things into gold. Tom was unpopular, and deservedly so, for he was a most surly old fellow, though an invaluable servant; but even in that rude block there was a vein of true humanity: he had tamed a number of song thrushes to come and hop about the stifling little yard, and all round it he had constructed narrow borders where the flowers flourished marvelously, considering their atmosphere. He it was who showed to Robert on his first arrival all the machinery and store-houses, and expatiated magnificently on the value of the business; he told him from what distant lands came this or that ingredient used in the manufactory, and almost impressed him with an idea that the world might cease to go round if a stoppage happened to Hawthorne and Co.

Some people regarded Tom Alden as a sort of fossil curiosity, for he had begun to watch the varnish pot when he was quite a young man, and he was now so old that Mr. Reuben Otley was daily on the lookout for an opportunity of superseding him, and giving him a retiring pension. Alden had discovered this, and it was a rare amusement to the bystanders to watch the cunning game of fence that was carrying on between them; Mr. Reuben Otley being anxious to displace a faithful old servant whom he considered superannuated, and old Tom being utterly determined only to resign his charge over the pot when he resigned his life or his senses.



## III.

Mr. Joshua Hawthorne's housekeeper took, at first, an enthusiastic liking to Robert, and so did he to her, but this pleasant state of things was not destined to be of any long continuance. Mrs. Eliotson was on a footing of equality with her master, presided at his table, and regulated his domestic expenses with sovereign sway; she had held her post for seven-and-twenty years, and was not likely to brook with equanimity a rival near the throne; such a rival she presently conceived Robert was inclined to be.

To a casual observer her face was extremely prepossessing, from its delicate softness of tint, the silvery braids of hair that shaded, and the clear snowy borders that surrounded it; but on nearer study, the square strong jaw, the close thin-lipped mouth, the steel blue eye, hard and implacable, suggested a cruel, perhaps a vindictive temper. She was crafty, fond of rule, invincibly obstinate, and full of pious professions; the name of religion was forever on her lips, but it was in her practice never. She did not belong to the Society of Friends, though she had adopted their dress—adopted it, perhaps, because it was so respectable. She possessed a small library of medical books, left to her by her deceased husband, upon which she founded a claim to be regarded in her private circle as an authority on all subjects connected with the healing art, whether as applied to body or mind; especially, she was great upon insanity, which she asserted to be in most cases a mere fantastical assumption on the part of the patients, and out of which they deserved to be coerced by even severer discipline than was the common practice at this date. Add to this that her master considered her the treasure of her sex—a jewel of goodness, piety, amiability, and order—and an idea of her power and importance in his bachelor household may be faintly conceived; also it may be conceived that young Robert Hawthorne was in evil case when she elected herself as his enemy, not his *open* enemy, but his bitter concealed foe. Hatred, like a rank weed, grows fast in a corrupt heart, and in hers its fruitage soon ripened into a determination to oust Robert from his place in his uncle's favor and liking before he was so firmly rooted there as to make the task one of difficulty; and having a keen natural taste for intrigue, she entered

upon her undermining persecutions with a secret and stealthy enjoyment.

Robert was no match for her astuteness; being one of the most frank, straightforward dispositions in the world himself, he was never suspicious of others, and fell innocently into many a snare which she laid warily for his incautious feet. She contrived that he should frequently transgress, or *seem* to transgress, first one, and then another of his uncle's household regulations; and when he was clear of all offence, she tried to poison the old man's mind against him, by insinuating that he was sly, and deceived them both.

It was some time before Robert saw what influence was working so stealthily against him, but gradually he perceived that his uncle's earlier kindness failed, that he was restricted of his liberty, watched and blamed when he was in no fault. So far, however, was he from tracing the disagreeable change to Mrs. Eliotson that he actually consulted her as to what he should do and what avoid to give satisfaction.

The housekeeper repaid his confidence by telling her master that his nephew had been complaining to her of him, and Robert got, in consequence, a severe reproof for his ingratitude.

"Pussy is not fond of you," said George Sancton to him, using significantly the name which the apprentices had conferred on the housekeeper. "She is making mouse of you, I can see." Robert demanded explanation. "She has made mouse of many people before now," answered the sagacious youth; "which means, that she has clawed and bemaused them until she was tired of the game, and then scrunched them up skin and bone. If you don't believe me, ask Tom Alden—he knows her."

Robert did not think fit to do any thing of the kind, but having got the clue, he was not long at a loss to trace whence issued the paltry persecutions and annoyances to which he was subjected; and no sooner had he ascertained, beyond a doubt, that it was Mrs. Eliotson who did him constant disservice with her master, than he forthwith challenged her to give him the reason why.

"What cause have you for trying to set my uncle against me, as I see you are doing, Mrs. Eliotson?" he asked, boldly.

"Set your uncle against you, Robert Hawthorne! You are under a delusion of the devil!" exclaimed she, flushing

all over her calm, pale face. "Take care—*take care* of his wicked suggestions, or it will be the worse for you, both temporally and eternally!" She lifted a menacing finger, and looked very much as if she intended that it *should* be the worse for him—temporally, at least.

For a moment the singular change that passion operated in her features literally fascinated Robert's gaze; all the hateful power and malignancy of her nature frowned upon him from her baleful eyes. It was a declaration of war—which would win? Envy, jealousy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, officered by craft and skill, or simplicity, innocence, and high metal, led by their impetuous captains, youth and inexperience? There is no struggle more often renewed in our world than this, and none where we have greater need to cry, "God defend the Right!"

#### IV.

For several weeks there had been a heaviness in the moral atmosphere at Messrs. Hawthorne and Co's. Every body about the premises was more or less sensitive to its oppression, but none could conjecture in what quarter the storm was likely to burst. Both the partners, but especially Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, became of a sudden watchful and suspicious; the apprentices, the workmen, even Conny himself, found themselves under a perpetual surveillance. John Otley who, more than any other, was supposed to be in the secrets of the firm, manifested all this time an impatient restlessness which was not habitual to him. His visage, sallow and lean through premature dissipation, became anxious and fevered; and for the first occasion within any body's remembrance, he was observed to be civil to his fellow apprentices, and to bear himself with almost abject humility toward old Tom Aldin. Speculation was rife in the office. Could the firm have experienced losses? Had the two heads quarrelled? Was it that John Otley, who looked so palpably wretched, was again teasing his uncle for leave to enter the army and be a gentleman at his expense, as the ambitious youth had been refused permission to do before? Or was Tom Aldin to be removed at last in spite of a threat to drown himself? No: Tom sat in the yard watching his *brew* and muttering to himself, but less disturbed than any

body. The old man was a spy both with eye and ear, and perhaps he was the only person who really knew what was preparing.

The cloud which now overshadowed the entire horizon had been, at first, a mere sign in the sky.

Early one morning Mr. Reuben Otley sought his partner with a vexed, mysterious face, saying—

“Hawthorne, there is something going wrong; we have got a thief amongst us, or I am very much mistaken.”

“Indeed! I am sorry to hear that. Whom do you suspect?” cried the old gentleman, rising flurried from his half-finished breakfast, while Mrs. Eliotson stirred her tea composedly, and begged her master not to agitate himself, lest he should bring on an attack of gout.

“I have not the slightest idea who is the culprit, but let me tell you what has happened. About ten days since I found the desk in our room where we keep the bag with the men’s wages *open*. The key had been turned in the lock without the lid having been closed down; I thought it was a carelessness of my own, and never mentioned it, for nothing appeared to have been disarranged, and there was no cause for suspicion. I, however, took special notice that the same accident did not occur again from my negligence—the desk does not shut readily, for the hinges seem to have had a strain, but the lock itself very easy. Imagine, then, my surprise this morning, when I found it open once more, and not only open, but the bag robbed of seven guineas, and then studiously retied, and laid where I left it. Nothing else had been disturbed. Now can you suggest who is the thief? Who has access to that room besides ourselves?”

“Only Mr. Constant,” replied Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, with a puzzled, reflective air.

“Only Mr. Hawthorne, Mr. Otley, and Mr. Constant,” chimed in Mrs. Eliotson, “only those three by right, but I have seen John and Robert go in and out repeatedly. I saw Robert there no later ago than yesterday.” She paused, and as her suggestion was not taken hold of as she perhaps anticipated it would be, she added: “But, of course, *they* would not touch any thing. Your nephew we know so well, Mr. Otley, and as for Robert, though he is a deep boy, still I could scarcely prevail upon myself to believe——”

"Let us have the boys in at once, and question them," interrupted Mr. Hawthorne, impatiently.

"You are so impetuous, my dear master! you do not suppose that the individual who stole the money would confess it for the mere asking, do you?" said the house-keeper, with bland irony.

"Confession and punishment are what he will have to come to, madam!" returned Mr. Reuben Otley, brusquely.

Pussy was very obnoxious to him; he would rather have had *her* proved the thief and put out of the way than any body else, for he lived in daily dread of her influencing his guileless partner in some weak moment to marry her.

"True, sir, true!" said she, with unprovokable calm; "but to bring him thereto you must temporize and watch. He is very sly."

"Who is very sly?" demanded Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, sharply.

"The thief, sir, whoever he may be," replied the house-keeper, with prompt evasiveness. She had distilled her drop of subtle venom and let it fall; she would trust to time and chance for its corrosive working in her master's mind: against his better reason, it already tainted Robert in his thoughts: and even clear sighted Mr. Reuben. Otley felt himself insensibly prejudiced against the lad by what she had so cautiously insinuated.

## V.

The two partners sought old Tom Aldin in his shed, and told him what had happened. Tom was longer in the firm than either of them, and was the safest person to take into their confidence.

"A thief in the house of Hawthorne and Co.! That's something new," said he, without lifting his eyes from the pot, "trust him to me, my masters, and I'll ferret him out. I'll tackle him!"

"You might leave the yard and loiter about seeing after the men, and Slater could attend to your work meantime," suggested Mr. Reuben Otley, who saw here a fine opportunity for displacing the old man without hurting his feelings. But Tom was too deep for him.

"Thank you kindly, master, all the same, but I couldn't

take to loitering at my time of life ; I must work till I drop," said he, with a wily grin. " Besides, if I'm to catch a thief I must not advertise myself as on the spy for him."

Mr. Reuben Otley reluctantly acquiesced, and from that moment began Tom's surveillance, which, cloak it as he would, soon became patent to every one employed on the premises.

Mrs. Eliotson, with the natural inquisitiveness of her sex and order, often paid him a visit in the yard and probed him conversationally to find out what he had discovered; but Tom was more than a match for the housekeeper, and kept his counsel. She suggested to him with an over-cautiousness that defeated itself, what she had previously tried to suggest to the partners about Robert. Tom appeared to swallow the bait avidly, but the next time she came to him he said, maliciously—

" You were a little bit suspicious about old master's nephew, Mrs. Eliotson, t' other day, so I'll set your good heart at rest. Whoever the thief *is* it *isn't* young Robert Hawthorne."

" Well, I am glad to hear *that*, for I frankly confess that I had my suspicions about him," replied she, with an ingenuous air, but with real disappointment at her heart. " You see, Tom, he came amongst us quite a stranger, none of us knowing any thing about him."

" I see a vast o' things, ma'am, and very kind of you it was to blacken the lad to the only friend he'd got—very kind indeed, ma'am, and just like you. When I saw old master looking so miserable, I knew who had been comforting him. Have you found out them words in your Bible about the folks whose buttery words is very swords? It's a fine saying yon—you should get it by heart, ma'am."

" You are disposed to be witty, Tom. When are we to lose your valuable services—on Saturday, is it not ?" retorted she, with smiling spite.

" No, ma'am, I can't be spared yet ; I maybe should have gone afore this if I had not had such a friend at court as yourself, but now there's a real delicate piece of work to do, Tom Aldin's found to be the lightest hand for it. Please to clear out of this, ma'am, you're in the way."

Tom's *brew* was at its climax, and he had no more talking time to bestow upon the housekeeper ; so she picked a few of his finest flowers, and then returned toward her own do-

mains. On the way she encountered Robert going indoors on a message from his uncle; the lad looked blithe and good humored enough, but at the sight of him such a spasm of fury and disappointment came over her that she would have liked to spit in his face. It was an immense effort of self control on her part to pass him smiling and without a word.

## VI.

Mrs. Eliotson had never sincerely thought that Robert Hawthorne *was* the thief, but her jealous hatred had insidiously tempted her to hope he *might* be. So far had she suffered the desire of her heart to carry her imagination that in fancy she had seen him proved guilty and ignominiously exchanging the shelter of his uncle's house for a prison. Tom Aldin's assurance to her of his innocence was, therefore, about the most aggravating piece of intelligence that she could have received at the moment; she went into her parlor chewing the bitter cud and ruminating on it very wrathfully.

If I could preach as Deborah Eliotson preached, with fluency and force of metaphor, I should say the devil went into the parlor with her, sat down and held a long conversation touching her dislike to Robert Hawthorne and her justifiableness in taking all and every means of getting him out of her way. I should say that he put such and such base thoughts into her mind, and clinched them all by showing how it only depended on her own craft and unscrupulousness to *make* the boy seem as guilty as she desired. Then I should take up the moral tone and show picturesquely the results of hearkening to his subtle whispers, and the almost impossibility of escaping from his delusions when we have once voluntarily yielded to them. But the fact is, that I am afraid to take his name in vain, or to treat him with such familiarity as she dared to do; indeed, she spoke of him so often that Tom Aldin said he was quite certain she did not believe in him, or if she believed in him, it was only as grown-up folks believe in the bogles which frighten their childhood, but were now found out to be myths.

"Get some money out of the bag and hide it in Robert Hawthorne's box; get some money out of the bag and hide it in Robert Hawthorne's box; *get some money out of the*

*bag and hide it in Robert Hawthorne's box,"* said some secret voice, which made her first feel rather chill and then very hot. "Do it to-night, do it to-night, *do it to-night.*" It kept on growing louder at every repetition; and at last she put away her respectable work and answered impatiently—

"Yes, yes, I'll do it to-night," in a flurried, suspicious way.

She sat in her chair doing nothing for nearly an hour after that. At first there was a disagreeable quivering in her flesh and a tendency to glance round and round the room with unsteady eye and knitted brow, but presently she regained her composure, and dozed off with her folded white hands lying innocently upon her apron. Was it the devil, I wonder, who had suggested such a pretty bit of wicked work for them to do by and by? She did not slumber easily; her lips went, and a sort of twittering convulsion distorted the muscles of her face; it was singular what a stealthy, disagreeable expression there was on her unconscious countenance, which when awake and watchful was so placid and benign. When she woke up it was to see Robert Hawthorne standing opposite to her, and regarding her with a puzzled steadfastness. Her first impulse was to order him away, but her habitual caution coming to her aid, she only stroked her hands, yawned, said something about being overtaken by drowsiness in the warm weather, and then took up a pious book and began to read. After a few minutes of this edifying exercise, she looked up from the consolatory page, and asked Robert if he wanted any thing particular that he stayed loitering about there in office hours.

"I want to ask my uncle to let me go home with George Sancton to tea. I thought I should find my uncle here," was the lad's reply.

"Oh! I can give you permission to go home with George Sancton. I will tell your uncle where you are gone, so you need not wait for his coming in; he went up the town, and may be some time away," said the housekeeper; and as Robert, pleased at his holiday evening, went out of the room, she laughed to herself in a satisfied way and whispered, perhaps to the ear of her familiar devil—"Well, surely nothing could have happened more opportunely!"



## VII.

Never had Mistress Deborah Eliotson talked in a more edifyingly pious and moral tone than she talked that night when her master brought in Mr. Reuben Otley to eat his muffin at her tea-table; and never had credulous, kindly old Joshua Hawthorne felt more fully persuaded that she was at once the most admirable, the most excellent, and the cleverest of women.

As if her friend, the found out sham, had done his best to make his choice bit of work easy to her hand, it happened that after tea her master sent her with his keys into his room, adjoining the office, as he had done many a time before, to fetch in a new pamphlet which he had bought for her perusal and left in the desk. These were the days of pamphlets and pamphleteers; Deborah Eliotson took an immense interest in these ephemeral productions, and the more scurrilously violent they were against existing dignities the better she liked them.

Both clerks and apprentices were gone, and the office was as silent as the grave; nevertheless, Mrs. Deborah's heart beat fast, and her ear listened suspiciously toward the door as she fitted the key into the lock of the desk; in a moment it was turned, the lid was raised, the bag lifted out and untied, and a handful of mixed gold and silver clutched and slipped into her capacious pocket. She did not stay to re-close the bag, but snatching up the pamphlet, she locked the desk and rushed hastily back into the house, quite unconscious of the silent ecstasies of delight which were half strangling old Tom Aldin as he watched her through a broken pane of the smoke and dust-darkened skylight.

Every night for three weeks back had the persevering spy taken his airy exercise upon the roof—this day with signal success. He had discovered that there were *two* thieves in the employ of Messrs. Hawthorne and Co., and to have found out that Pussy, his favorite aversion, was one of them almost exalted him out of his discretion. He would have richly enjoyed pouncing upon her there and then, but he had acquired a keen relish for his office of detective, and having an intuitive certainty that she would carry on her nefarious operations in superior style, his professional curiosity was

excited to study them. Instead, therefore, of immediately communicating with his master, and reaping his deserved crop of glories, he stayed watching until nightfall, and then chuckled his way to bed ; reveling in the anticipation of how he would slow-torture Pussy on the morrow if he got the chance.

When Mrs. Eliotson reappeared in the parlor with her pamphlet, she looked rather flushed and out of breath ; she had made a rapid journey to the top of the house, and poured the contents of her pocket into Robert Hawthorne's box, and covered the money with some of poor Mary's linen that she had made for her boy. The two old gentlemen noticed the flurry of her manner, and Mr. Joshua said, in his careful comfortable way—

"Why don't you use young Betsy's feet to run up stairs, Mrs. Eliotson ? You and I ought to begin to save ourselves—we are not so active as we have been."

"I have been up stairs, sir," replied she, without hesitation, and then opened the pamphlet and began to read.

The partners were talking about the first theft from the money bag, and saying that it had not been repeated. She listened intently.

"Tom Alden is very close, but I believe he has got an inkling of the culprit at last," said Mr. Reuben Otley. "He will be certain, however, before he speaks. He gave me a hint to-day, and asked if I was still as intent on punishing the thief. I told him 'Yes,' if it was my own brother's son he should not escape ; so he said—

"Then have patience, master, just a little bit longer, or you will spoil all. I'm next to sure I know him, and as soon as I can put my finger on him for certain I'll do it.' Tom is to be trusted."

"Yes, yes, Tom is to be trusted, Tom is to be trusted," replied Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, uneasily, "but the suspense makes me wretched, I'd part with all I possess, rather than it should turn out to be poor Mary's boy."

"I suppose the young men's desks have been subjected to search ?" said Mrs. Eliotson, in a casual manner, and without lifting her eyes from her book.

"Yes, but nothing suspicious was found in any. They all submitted to it with perfect frankness, disagreeable as the ordeal must have been to the honest high-spirited young fellows. I assure you I was ashamed to have to propose such a course," replied Mr. Joshua Hawthorne.

"The thief would most likely convey his spoils home, and hide them there," again suggested the housekeeper's meek tones. Her master fidgeted about on his seat, and Mr. Reuben Otley kept the velvet-pawed Pussy under his eye.

"She knows something," thought he.

"Where is Robert gone? It seems as if he avoided me," said the elder partner; and Mrs. Eliotson answered that he had gone home with George Scanton to drink tea.

A long and painful pause ensued, which was broken by Mr. Joshua Hawthorne saying hoarsely, while his fine old face quivered with pain—

"Whether rightly or wrongly, there is amongst us three a feeling of suspicion against my poor young nephew; he is out of the way: suppose, Mrs. Eliotson, you go and examine his room—if he is guilty, there may be found tokens of it."

He could not say any more, and the housekeeper, with what seemed even to Mr. Reuben Otley an unfeeling alacrity, departed on her mission. The two partners sat silent until her return, which was very speedy; they that hide can find; and ere she had been gone five minutes, she reappeared with her apron gathered up in her hand, and the miscellaneous coin which she had taken from the bag, and deposited in the box, rattling as she walked. With a grievously solemn countenance she poured it upon the table, and said:

"I found all that thrown loosely in amongst Robert Hawthorne's clothes—of course, I do not know what money of his own he had, but perhaps you do?" appealing to her master.

The old gentleman said that to his knowledge the lad had little or none, and meanwhile Mr. Reuben Otley was narrowly examining piece after piece of the coin. At last he ceased his examination, and replied to his partner's questioning look:

"I am afraid the case is but too clear against him, there are several of the pieces of marked money that I put into the bag last Saturday."

"Well, I would not have credited it on any evidence less clear!" tremulously exclaimed old Joshua Hawthorne. "I should have said that truth and honesty were inscribed upon his countenance."

"Appearances are deceitful," quoted Mr. Reuben Otley from one of the blue and gilt papers on the office walls.

Pussy looked on, so demure and so pious, enjoying stealthily the success of her intrigue, but she had not the supreme satisfaction of hearing at once how the firm intended to act; for after a few sentences of surprise, regret, and very natural indignation, her master and his partner went away together, the former turning round at the door to say, "Mrs. Eliotson, you will oblige us by not letting any thing that has been this evening discovered transpire. You will not speak to Robert about it if you please."

The house-keeper acquiesced, and when she was left alone, she betook herself to her pamphlets with that sense of ease and repose which follows on the accomplishment of an arduous and dangerous task.

### VIII.

The following day at a quarter before noon the great bell which warned the men at Messrs. Hawthorne and Co.'s to begin and leave off work, resounded through house, yard, and shops, and as previously concerted, every man and boy employed on the premises repaired to the private room of the head of the firm, each respectfully doffing his cap as he entered the presence of his masters. Old Tom Aldin came last, wearing a most sullen and aggrieved countenance, but his eyes brightened with a gay malignancy as he perceived Pussy, sleek of visage, and purring delightedly over the anticipated disgrace of her rival. He gave her a queer glance and a nod imperceptible except to herself, which made her color waver a little and her pulse beat many degrees faster; but she immediately recovered herself and hurled him back a defiant stare, which only caused him to drop his chin upon his breast and laugh inaudibly. That gesture of his gave her a feeling of deadly sickness, and if an evil wish could have killed, Tom Aldin would at that moment have been the victim of an apoplectic seizure, and would never have spoken word more.

Mr. Reuben Otley had possession of the desk, and was evidently to be the spokesman of the assembly; for his elder partner sat in the great chair looking enfeebled and prostrate, and deaf even to the dulcet whispers of Pussy. Robert was grieved to see his uncle so ill. When he went near to inquire why it was, the old man waved him back impatiently,

and averted his face, while the house-keeper launched at him a glance of the direst contempt.

"Are we all here?" began Mr. Reuben Otley, glancing from under his heavy black brows at the various expressions of wonderment and impatience depicted on the lines of faces before him. "Are we all here?"

"Yes, sir, all," replied Conny, who had silently checked off upon a list each individual as he entered the room. Mr. Reuben Otley cleared his sonorous voice, and recommenced—

"You are gathered for a solemn purpose—an event has occurred, a crime has been committed under this roof such as has never before taken place since I became a partner in the firm of Hawthorne and Co. Men, we have a *thief* amongst us."

There was a pause of awful silence during which any one might have heard a pin fall. Some of the work people glanced aside at their neighbors, but there was no token of guilty alarm amongst them; only Robert Hawthorne stood a little in advance of the first rank, his color raised and eyes dilated at the sudden and to his mind terrible announcement. Poor old Joshua Hawthorne stretched out his limbs as if he were enduring tortures, and breathed audibly, while Pussy patted his arm to soothe him, looking herself all the while as benign and innocent as a cherub.

Mr. Reuben Otley went on. "Yes, I repeat it—we have a thief amongst us, but he is *known*—he is *KNOWN*." A slight rustle in the rear of the crowd, and a suppressed murmur of satisfaction, followed this declaration. "You are all aware of our rule—you all understand our principle—it is justice that one diseased sheep should perish rather than the whole flock should incur the risk of becoming tainted. Our house must be purged of the knave instantly, but in deference to the urgent representations of my partner, who pleads the offender's youth, I have consented to this. If he choose to stand forth now in the presence of you all, whom his misconduct might have brought under suspicion, and confess his guilt, he shall be permitted to leave us, unpunished save by a sound horse-whipping from our carter; but if he will *not*—he must abide the awful consequences of being delivered up into the hands of the law. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, I speak your determination as well as my own, do I not?"

"Yes, yes," replied the old man, with a miserable glance

toward Robert, who began to notice Pussy's watchful eye upon himself as if she were, indeed, to use George Sancton's expressive phrase, 'making mouse of him,' and enjoying the process intensely.

"We give him five minutes to make up his mind. Jem Driver, you have brought your horsewhip as you were bidden to do?" added Mr. Reuben Otley, like the awful voice of fate, as he had took out his big silver watch and laid it on the desk between himself and his partner. For the space of three minutes there was a dead silence; then from a remote corner of the room where John Otley had hidden himself there spoke a hoarse whining voice—

"Uncle Reuben, if you will only forgive me this once I promise faithfully never to touch the money bag again;" and the culprit slowly trailed himself into the open space before his petrified relative as the ranks of the men fell apart to let him pass.

Both the partners seemed struck dumb, and Mr. Reuben Otley glared at his nephew with starting stony eyes. It was several minutes before he found a voice to speak, and when he could utter at last, all he said was, "What! are there *two* of you?" Are *you* a thief, John?"

The lad, quaking and looking every inch a mean dastard, began to cry and excuse himself.

"No, master, there's *not* two of 'em," interposed Tom Aldin, gruffly. "The other did not put the money where it was found."

By this time Mr. Reuben Otley had recovered himself from his paralysis of surprise and worked himself into a passion.

"You base knave!" cried he, in a trembling tone; "did you try to screen yourself by implicating another? I will not listen to a word. You are my dear dead brother's son, but you shall not escape. Jem Driver, do what I bade you! Use a vigorous arm; don't spare him!" And flinging open the door into the yard which adjoined the office, he drove his nephew forth, crying and entreating until the willing application of the whip changed his whine into a most dolorous howl.

Nobody lifted up a word for the thief; indeed one or two showed signs of enjoying his punishment until they saw the uncontrollable agonized working of his uncle's face. Every lash cut far deeper into his proud old heart than it

did into the culprit's flesh. It was terrible to see a man of his strong, hard character so moved. Indeed, he was stung in those feelings where he was most tender—in his love for his only relative, a lad who ought to have been bound to him by every sentiment of gratitude and affection, and in his public and often boasted reputation of a moral guardian to the young men under his care. The latter wound was, perhaps, the sorer of the two. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne was even more visibly stirred than his partner, and Pussy was as white as the well starched kerchief folded over her bosom. The internal condition of that bosom was by no means to be envied, stabbed as it was metaphorically by old Tom Aldin's significant glances. She felt sure that by some means or other he had witnessed her feat of the night before, and she writhed justly under his power of exposing her.

Jem Driver's arm must have ached before he was bidden to cease the merited punishment, and John Otley, bruised and sore, was permitted to slink out of sight. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne then took his partner's arm and led him away in silence, though neither of them could forbear looking after the whipped hound with a yearning of pity. They had grown into a habit of liking him, of boasting of his cleverness, and of regarding him as one of their successors in the firm; and his uncle, so to speak, never held up his head as proudly or was quite himself again after this disgrace. Pussy followed her master, scarcely able to realize that the morning's play was played out; but at the doorway she glanced stealthily back toward Tom Aldin, who was talking to Robert, and the shrewd malicious old fellow looked at her in return so blankly, that she could if she liked delude herself into the belief that her first fear was unfounded, and that he, like others who had been told of the discovery in Robert's box, would imagine that John Otley had conveyed the money there, when detection was at hand, to screen himself.

Tom was not troubled with any abstract ideas of justice, and not perceiving that John was any the worse off for bearing the weight of Pussy's crime in addition to his own, he said not a word on the matter, being determined to indemnify himself for previous disappointment by slow-torturing his feline-tempered foe for some time to come. A slight lifting of the eyebrow, a sidelong significant glance, a twist of his ugly mouth, a single meaning word, were sufficient to double the

speed of the respectable housekeeper's pulse, and to make her shake in her silver-buckled shoes. She would have been a far wiser, and in the long run a far happier woman, if she could have humbled herself to confess her sins to her master and to accept the inevitable disgrace. The purgatory Tom Alden kept her in was a heavier punishment even for her guilt.

## IX

And she had yet more to endure than *that*. She underwent a frightful shock about a month after the grand scene of justice in the partner's room. It happened that Robert Hawthorne mislaid or lost a favorite knife which, besides being a knife, was a corkscrew, a button-hook, and several other instruments, and in search of it he turned out upon his bedroom floor all the contents of that box into which Mrs. Eliotson had thrown the money abstracted from the desk. He did not find the missing article, but he found instead Pussy's pocket nutmeg-grater about which he had repeatedly heard her making inquiries during the last few weeks. He was puzzled to conjecture how it could have come there, and carrying it down stairs into the parlor where his uncle was sitting before the big Bible ready to read family prayers when all the household were assembled, he offered it to Mrs. Eliotson, saying—

"I found your nutmeg-grater in my box ; I wonder how it got there. Uncle Joshua, do you know that John Otley persists in declaring that it was not he who hid the money in my box ?"

"I have forbidden you to hold any communication with John Otley, Robert," replied the old man, mildly ; he who would do the one bad deed would do the other. A thief would have no scruples about shuffling off his guilt on the shoulders of an innocent person."

As his uncle was speaking Robert's eye rested on Pussy's face ; she changed color, and her hand jerked aimlessly about amongst the cups and saucers standing ready for breakfast. The master's words reassured her, and, putting her treacherous nutmeg-grater into its rightful receptacle, she said :

"I was arranging your clothes for you a little while since, and must have dropped it then. I wish you would try to



keep your things more neatly, Robert; a boy of your age should seek to acquire tidy habits."

Mr. Joshua Hawthorne murmured acquiescence, and the two female servants of the house entering with a curtsy, prayers began. Robert knelt down in an extraordinary state of bewilderment, and never recovered his self-possession all through breakfast. A most outrageous suspicion had entered into his mind:

"I do believe," said he to himself, "that it was Pussy, and nobody else, who put that money into my box!"

Meeting with a private opportunity during the morning, he actually mentioned his suspicions to Old Tom Aldin, but Tom burst into a loud guffaw, and ironically advised him to give them full publicity by way of testing the housekeeper's power of pious refutation in making such an accusation recoil upon himself. So Robert held his peace, and avenging fate still left Mistress Deborah Eliotson to the tender mercies of wicked Old Tom Aldin.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

## KINSFOLK AND FRIENDS.

"THERE are youthful dreamers,  
Building castles fair, with stately stairways ;  
Asking blindly  
Of the future what it cannot give them."  
LONGFELLOW.

## I.

MEANWHILE, Cyrus Hawthorne was away in London with Sir Philip Nugent. The lad was very happy in his new life, and wrote long, flourishing, affectionate accounts of it to his brother. He possessed a thousand luxuries and a thousand indulgences of which he was likely to feel only too keen an appreciation. There had been some idea of sending him to Eton or Harrow, but on further consideration, and for very obvious reasons, Sir Philip finally decided on giving him a home education. One Reverend Samuel Miles was elected to the office of his tutor, and that gentleman could have borne truthful testimony to the youngster's imperious temper as well as to his fine talents. Poor Mary Hawthorne had indulged her darling very much, and Sir Philip Nugent gave him no check. In fact, he soon conceived for him an overweening pride and affection. Cyrus possessed those gifts of nature which attract love in an uncommon degree.

His brother's letter showed Robert an immense contrast between their two lives. Cyrus was in the height of prosperity—seeing good company, free of a luxurious home, reaping the advantages of a careful education, while he was leading a plain, hard-working existence, exposed to the mean tyranny of Mistress Deborah Eliotson, and finding all his relaxation in a country walk with George Sancton. No wonder if he were inclined to think his brother had drawn the happier lot. It was not in a boastful spirit that Cyrus wrote, but he certainly did make the best of every thing in those

letters of his, though he had his mortifications and vexations much the same as Robert. His left-handed kinship to Sir Philip Nugent was not long in oozing out, and there were some amongst his young gentleman companions who could hurl at him a stinging rebuke, upon occasion, if his insolent superiority aggrieved them; and the Reverend Samuel Miles had known him reject their society for a week after one of these cuts, until the tingling soreness wore off.

Sir Philip's own people—his mother, his aunt, Lady Leigh, and his presumptive heir, Mr. Nugent of the Leasowes—were early made aware of the rumors of his having taken an illegitimate son to bring up under his own roof. The matter was spoken of in quiet corners without any intensity of reprobation. "Sir Philip Nugent had been rather wild in his youth; he had made a miserable marriage, and that explained it, but he was doing his best to atone for his errors now." Very few persons knew Mary Hawthorne's real history; and even had it been known universally, no doubt he would have found his apologists. It has been said that in love and war all stratagems are allowable, and in the earlier part of this present century the general tone of morals was looser, perhaps, than it is now. Sir Philip never had belonged to the strictest sect, and probably he felt, with the majority of people, that he was performing a meritorious deed in openly taking Cyrus into his own hands; that the boy was beautiful, spirited, and of remarkably fine parts, made the virtuous act also pleasant.

There was no particular bent given to the lad's education, which was a grave error. The Reverend Samuel Miles was a scholar and a gentleman, but he was a thoroughly impractical person, and like old Master Scrope at Chinelyn, he was disposed to think more reverently of his pupil's verse-making and occasional sparks of originality than they deserved. If Cyrus had been heir to an earldom—heir, in fact, to his father's kingdom—he would probably have been less flattered and spoilt. With elder people, while he was young, his position was a reason the more for letting him go unchecked: "Poor fellow," they would half compassionately observe, "his proud spirit will get a fall soon enough." In reality it got more falls already than any one but Mr. Miles suspected, for Cyrus was learning to be secretive as to his feelings, and winced many a time when he said never a word.

## II.

There were three play-fellows of his, sons of Mr. Nugent of the Leasowes, boys of his own age or thereabouts, into whose minds the ideas of succession and property had early entered. They were ordinary good-natured lads as a rule, but Cyrus and they rarely met without a quarrel, and one day this quarrel ended in a fight. No doubt the young Leasowes Nugents were jealous of Cyrus, who could beat them at all manner of games as well as all manner of lessons, who was so handsome, and such a personal favorite, especially with women, and who had so many more indulgences than themselves. And, no doubt, Cyrus presumed on his decisive superiority to laud it over them more than was at all times pleasant. Alfred, the eldest of the three brothers, generally bore his vamping with a magnanimous equanimity, but one hot day, when all their tempers were chafed about the disputed issue of a certain race, he was provoked to say:

"Take your fling, Cyrus, you'll have to knock under by and by. You were never made to be master long, you know."

"What do you mean?" cried Cyrus, in a fume.

"Gently, soh gently," retorted the other, as if he were soothing a restive horse. "High spirit does not always show pure breeding. But you are a sort of cousin, Cyrus, and as I am above showing malice, when I come to my kingdom, I'll make you my bailiff."

This was more than Cyrus could endure. Half blind with rage, he flung himself upon his antagonist, and in the shock both came to the ground. It was not a scientific fight, but it was one in which some very vengeful blows were exchanged, and both combatants got considerably mauled. Mr. Miles witnessed the struggle from his bed-chamber window, and when it had gone on long enough for the letting of any ill blood there was between them, he walked out and interfered.

"You fight like a cat!" screamed young Alfred, wiping the blood from a long scratch with which Cyrus had embellished his nose; "I wish we had you at Eton—we would soon teach you the right use of fists!"

In fact, there was a gleam of tigerish ferocity in Cyrus's dilated eyes, and a white foam on his livid lips. Mr. Miles

deemed it expedient to take his pupil's arm and lead him away, and when he came to his senses he gave him a lecture, by which he would have done well to profit. The lively letters to Robert contained no allusion to incidents of this nature, so that he was quite justified in believing that his brother led a life of perpetual sunshine, and he was very glad so to believe.

It was at the Leasowes that the fight took place, but, that and the quarrels notwithstanding, the young Nugents were not altogether unfavorably disposed toward their left-hand cousin. Sir Philip Nugent had now been some time a widower, and perfectly eligible to marry again; but his having taken Cyrus home was the strongest pledge that he did not intend it. The Leasowes Nugents, as his heirs presumptive, were, of course, more deeply interested in the matter than anybody else, and their father instructed them always to defer to Cyrus, at least when he was their guest. Sir Philip lived on the best terms with his cousin, but when he heard of the fight, and the taunt that originated it, he was extremely angry. It was not Cyrus who told, but Jack, the youngest brother, and Master Alfred would have been summarily dismissed out of the way of further mischief, to finish his holidays at his grandmother Bedingfield's, had not Cyrus himself spoken against such a silly and unjust proceeding. But though too proud or too generous to permit any one else to avenge his affront, Cyrus neither forgot nor forgave it.

### III.

About the same time as the fight occurred at the Leasowes there occurred to Robert at Walton Minster an incident which might have exercised a sinister influence on his fortunes, had he not possessed fortitude and self-denial enough to set its immediate and apparent advantages aside.

From his youth upward he had a tendency to make friends of womankind—a softness left to him, perhaps, from his recollections of his mother; and his two earliest, in his adopted country were old-maid Kibblewhite, at the little tea and coffee shop on the western corner of the market-place, and her niece Dorothea.

The first time he went home to tea with George Sancton, arriving about ten minutes past five, he found Miss Kibble-

white posting up her day book at the desk behind the counter, perched on a tall stool, with her little stuff slippers at least half a yard from the floor. She got down deliberately, and gave Robert a kindly ceremonious welcome. Next to King George the Third and the Royal family, the old lady thought the firm of Messrs. Hawthorne and Co. the most important and honorable house in the empire. As there was no customer in view at that late hour, she bade an errand boy of minute proportion "keep the shop," and herself led the way up stairs to the best parlor, which had a sunshiny bay-window overlooking the market-place.

"George has prevailed on his young friend, Robert Hawthorne, to come and drink his tea with us this evening, Dorothea," she said, addressing a young woman, who leant over a great embroidery frame, at work upon a shepherd-boy piping to his flocks beside a very blue and very impetuous cascade.

Dorothea rose, performed a curtsy after the fashion of fifty years ago, and then sat down again. Robert felt as if he had fallen into very fine company indeed, and, carefully balancing himself on the edge of a hard, faded tapestry settee, he responded in his best tone and manner to the precise little catechism of inquiries touching his own health, his uncle's health, Mrs. Deborah Eliotson's health, and that of all his other kinsfolk and friends with whom he could only communicate by letter. Then he detailed his impressions of Walton Minster, and described Chinelyn and the Manor Farm, and almost before he was aware he found himself talking enthusiastically of his dear brother Cyrus, and the days at home, while Miss Kibblewhite listened with sympathizing interest, and her little bird-like head gently inclined to one side.

Dorothea listened also with a smile on her pleasant face. She was a fine young woman, healthy and blooming, not pretty, perhaps, but agreeable and comely to look at with her bright brown eyes, ruddy cheek, and clear skin, contrasted by a crop of rich dark curls confined by a sky-blue ribbon. She had a sincere countenance, and her glance betrayed a sparkling vivacity of temper; but with all her air and brightness of youth she had a resemblance that was almost ludicrous to the old-maid Kibblewhite, her aunt, whose complexion was as dry as dust and her shape about as symmetrical as the market pump. Robert Hawthorne

took to Dorothea Sancton at the first glance, and Dorothea took to him. She was a serviceable clever girl, such as boys like and like to look up to, but never conceive a sentimental fancy for. There was no aroma of romance about her, but every thing that was useful and homely. All her acquaintance were in the habit of claiming her help at family festivals. No marriage party was esteemed complete unless her face beamed from some nook of the room upon it; no christening party was ever made up in her absence, and when death and sorrow got into a house she was more frequently sent for in her office of comforter than any one else. But—and Dorothea could not help sometimes wondering how and why it was—no suitor had yet come to woo in Miss Kibblewhite's cosy parlors, and Dorothea was as fancy free at fair nineteen as she was on the day when she was born.

She presently departed to prepare tea, and after about twenty minutes' absence she returned to announce that it was ready down stairs; so the boys followed Miss Kibblewhite to a little room communicating with the shop by a half glass door, and also looking upon a graveled court of about twelve feet square that was fragrant with mignonette. Dorothea presided over the tray, and dispensed the slices of seed-cake liberally; while her aunt sat at one side of the table, ready to sally forth and serve a customer, should any such appear during the progress of the meal.

Old Miss Kibblewhite believed in all the severer proprieties, and was evidently used to keep the young people in capital order, for Dorothea was as mute as a mouse in her presence, and George indulged none of his mischievous monkeyish vivacity. She held as an axiom that children should be seen and not heard, at their meals especially; but she talked with great fluency herself, and chiefly in an anecdotic manner, about her father and mother and grandfather and grandmother respectively, back to the days when George I. was king, all the three young people listening with an undemonstrative interest. When tea was over, however, she relaxed her dignity, and as Dorothea was putting on a large bibbed apron to cover her gown while she washed the best gilt china, which had honored Robert Hawthorne's visit, the old lady took it from her hands, and, resolutely investing her own square little person in its ample folds, she said.

"No, Dorothea. You will amuse the boys better than I.

Let them go up stairs and look out of the window, or let them have the dominoes and cribbage-board, but" (this in a whisper aside) "take care they do not touch any thing to spoil it."

There was some laughing as the three went up stairs, glad of their release from playing at Grave-airs, which made prim little Miss Kibblewhite feel doubtful of the propriety of leaving them to themselves, but when they reached the parlor it suddenly ceased.

The evening sun was shining in at one corner of the bay-window, across where the embroidery frame stood with a richly variegated fringe of scarlet, orange, purple, white, and green skeins of floss silk hanging from its pegs. But that bit of lustrous, brilliant color did not absorb all the light and radiant glow. It seemed to rally chiefly round a little figure perched aloft in Dorothea's high chair—a little figure wagging a pair of small feet impatiently, and whose loose wandering curls had netted a sheaf of the golden rays at least. This little figure had a face soft and fair as a white flower, and lips always pouting for a kiss. It was a dimpled face, and ought to have been sunshiny by rights, but at this moment it was full of a child's most pathetic sorrowfulness. A straw hat lay on the carpet beside her, and her gay poppy-colored sash, which she had fretted and untied, hung trailing on the dull gray floor. She was as pretty a picture of somebody's toy and rebellious pet as you could see on the longest summer day; but there was something about her that betrayed she was not a *mother's* darling; poor little Lilian had no mother; she was only a great lady's adopted child.

Dorothea Sancton, however, loved her very tenderly, and sprang toward her with outstretched arms and a cry of eager delight.

"Oh! Lilian, how came you here all alone?" then couching her in her lap, with the pretty fair head pressed up against her bosom, she kissed her on lips and cheek and brow with an enthusiasm of affection. The child was used to this idolatry and liked it. She nestled one tiny fat hand round Dorothea's neck, and with the other began to tangle her orderly tiers of curls, while she lisped out an explanation of her appearance there, with a pretty preciseness of speech which showed how carefully the little maiden was taught, and how diligent and painstaking she was herself:



"Lady Leigh took me to the evening prayers, and left me here as she went through the market-place to see her widows. She will call for me, and to look at the shepherd as she returns home. The house door was open and I came up stairs by myself." There was a whimpering tremulousness in her tone, however, which would have convinced Dorothea that something was amiss, had not the cloudy little face betrayed it already. She tried to divert her by exhibiting the gay shepherd; but, for once, the child was not inclined to notice him. "My father played the anthem," said she, beginning to cry. "Oh! Dorothea, I want to go home to my father! I want to go home!" She twisted herself round from the contemplation of the rosy-cheeked boy, and hid her eyes against Dorothea's neck. The little heart had been filling before, now it overflowed. She did not care for the shepherd, his flock, his pipe, his crook, or his cascade any more. She had heard her father making beautiful, grand music on the Minster organ, and all she wanted was to go home to him.

Dorothea was frightened by this tender, passionate outbreak, and tried various methods of consolation in vain.

"Hush, my darling, hush; you will spoil your pretty eyes!" Lilian cared nothing for her eyes at this moment, except as they were useful to cry with. "Lady Leigh will come, and she will be so grieved to see you. You love Lady Leigh?" Oh, yes! Lilian loved Lady Leigh, but she loved her father better, and she wanted to go home—she wanted to go home. "But," persisted Dorothea, almost at her wits' end, "if you go home you will have to work as I do, but Lady Leigh will have you taught, and made clever like herself."

"I would rather be like you, Dorothea; I love you more than Lady Leigh. I do not want to be like her."

Dorothea signed to George that he should come and try to divert the little rebel's thoughts; and, after a few minutes' shy study of Robert Hawthorne, who had approached with him, she condescended to let the two boys chair her round the room upon their crossed arms, and was presently laughing far more loudly than she had cried before. In the midst of the game, while Robert was pronouncing a mimic oration in the little queen's praise, the door opened, and, ushered by Miss Kibblewhite, entered my Lady Leigh, a very tall, imposing, aristocratic dame, with powdered hair and a dress of sombre magnificence. She paused just inside

the door, leaning upon a gold-headed stick, and, glancing sharply round the room, demanded—

“Whose voice was it that I heard but just now as I came up stairs?”

“It was Robert Hawthorne who was speaking, my lady,” replied Dorothea, dropping a deferential courtesy.

“And who is Robert Hawthorne, pray? Any relative of old Joshua Hawthorne, the varnish-maker in Maiden Lane?”

“Yes, my lady; and a fellow apprentice to the firm with my nephew, George Sancton,” said Miss Kibblewhite, with deep respect.

“His voice reminded me of Sir Philip Nugent’s,” cried the lofty dame, advancing heavily into the room, each step accentuated by a thud of the gold-headed stick. She honored Robert with a prolonged, scrutinizing stare, from which she did not release him, though a flush of angry confusion darkened his countenance. “And his face reminds me of Sir Philip’s also, more now than at the first glance. Where were you bred, Robert Hawthorne?”

“At Chinelyn,” replied the lad, reluctantly.

“At Chinelyn! I ought to have some recollection of Chinelyn,” mused Lady Leigh, with a suspicious sidelong look at his face. “Yes; ’tis a little fishing village on the coast of Wight.” She turned away abruptly, and bade Dorothea exhibit her work.

“I am sure, my lady, Robert Hawthorne can tell you any thing you wish to know about it. We have been quite pleased with his talk ourselves,” suggested Miss Kibblewhite.

“No need. I remember now what puzzled me in the name before. Have you any brother, Robert Hawthorne?”

“Yes, madam; I have a brother Cyrus.”

Lady Leigh stood several minutes commenting on the embroidery, but evidently without thinking of what she said, for her stern eyes were looking Robert Hawthorne over from head to foot, and her last act before leaving the room was to glance back over her shoulder at his face again, as if she wished to fix an indelible portrait of his features in her mind.

Robert Hawthorne was not philosopher enough to reason on the fortuitous course of events, and this sudden rencontre with Lady Leigh mortified him excessively. Whether judiciously or not, Mr. Joshua Hawthorne had concealed

from Robert that he was living in the midst of his father's people, and her recognition of him was a sharp stroke indeed. During the temporary absence of Miss Kibblewhite and Dorothea, who had accompanied Lady Leigh and the child down stairs, he was glad to accept George Sancton's challenge to a game at dominoes, and to sit down opposite to his less observant comrade, to hide his disturbance from question on their return. But Lady Leigh's behavior had struck Miss Kibblewhite as so singular that she could not refrain from making some remark upon it.

"How very odd of her ladyship to find a resemblance to her nephew in Robert Hawthorne," said she; "I never heard her notice any one else in the same way before. But I am sure, Dorothea, I myself saw something in his features that struck me as familiar, though I should never have thought of Sir Philip Nugent, if Lady Leigh had not named him."

Dorothea said, "Indeed, aunt," and nothing more, for where she sat she could see the red tide of painful confusion rising into the lad's face again.

"What are you about, Robert? it is your turn to play," said George Sancton, and some other subject intervening, Miss Kibblewhite's attention was called away.

#### IV.

It was a very lovely evening; and by and by, Dorothea, tiring of her embroidery frame, suggested that it was a pity to let it pass without taking a walk; the two boys being of the same mind, they all sallied forth and went out of the town, across an ancient bridge of one arch spanning the river Gled, beyond which lay a stretch of ripening meadows and rich pasture land, with a pleasant country road winding through them. Robert Hawthorne had now been several months at Walton Minster, but he had never before strayed so far as Dorothea led him that evening. He had scarcely dreamed of finding such luxurious green shade of woods and such musical brooks within a walk of the smoke and squalor of the ancient city. The villages, farmsteads, and solitary laborer's cottages they passed all wore a thriving aspect, and Robert having made some remark to that effect, Dorothea said—

"It is the same all over the Hadley Royal estate. Sir Philip Nugent is an excellent landlord."

Robert started, and asked, almost involuntarily, "Does Sir Philip Nugent live here?"

"He has a house here, but he rarely, if ever, comes down. If we walk to the top of this hill we shall look straight over to it. It is considered a very grand place—the grandest in the country, I believe."

When they gained the hill top, however, there was a mist in the valley rising from the river, so that Robert could only discern a vast pile of buildings, with a confused number of gables and chimneys rising out of it, and fine slopes of wood on the outskirts of a great park.

"If it were clearer you would see the ruins of Eurevaux Abbey," said Dorothea; "they lie right up at the head of Glededale. There's not a sweeter spot in the world to spend a summer holiday in than Eurevaux; is there, George?"

"Is Eurevaux Sir Philip Nugent's property also," Robert asked.

"Yes; it is all his property for miles on this side of Walton."

It was growing dusk, but not so dusk that Robert's frequent changes of countenance could escape Dorothea's notice. She, however, appeared as little observant as possible, and because she felt intuitively that Robert had a secret interest in the family, she began to tell him that Lady Leigh and her sister-in-law, Lady Nugent, Sir Philip's mother, lived in two houses on the Minster Hill, and that all Walton honored them for their goodness and charity. Lady Leigh was especially liberal. She was childless, but very fond of children, and since her widowhood she had adopted and brought up a succession of motherless girls, two of whom she had recently portioned and married—one to a beneficed clergyman, the other to a young naval officer, a distant relative of her own. Her last *protégée* was little Lilian Carlton, the only child of Peter Carlton, organist and choir-master at the Minster.

Robert listened to these details with a sick throbbing at his heart. This was the first time since his coming to Walton that any thing had occurred to remind him of what was awkward and unnatural in his position. The idea of having any thing to conceal was insupportably repugnant to his open and honest temper, and after wrestling with it for some

time in silence, he startled Dorothea by saying, just as they came within the shadow of the town—"Dorothea, I must tell some one—let me tell you; Cyrus and I are Sir Philip Nugent's sons."

The young woman made some kind of incoherent answer, but quite enough to draw him on to add, "Our mother is dead, and she is always to be spoken of with reverence. Indeed, Dorothea, she was as good as an angel, but Sir Philip was very deceitful and cruel to her. Mr. Ford, the clergyman at home, always said our mother was without any blame."

"Yes, my dear, I am quite sure of it—never mind telling me any more now," said Dorothea, warmly. She had caught hold of the boy's hand, and held it until they parted at the top of Maiden Lane. It was months since he had spoken of his mother to any one, and at the thought of her his voice broke into a passionate sob. As he went down the dark silent street alone he was crying bitterly. From that day forth Robert Hawthorne and Dorothea Sancton were friends.

## V.

Lady Leigh, widow of the last Lord Leigh of Yarborough, was, as Dorothea Sancton stated, a good and useful woman; every body in Walton Minster knew exactly to what extent she was good and useful, and they praised her in the gates accordingly. She was not one to hide her light under a bushel; she preferred rather to set it upon a hill, as it were, that it might be seen of the whole country, and reflect a modified lustre upon her order. Her sister-in-law, Lady Nugent, was also charitable and pious, but in a minor degree; she did her alms-deeds in byways and secret places, and lived a very modest retired life, dividing her time between her Bible, her poor folks, her household, and her letters to her dear son, very equitably. Lady Leigh had built and endowed a hospital for poor widows, and had added considerably to a foundation for the education of orphans. She had erected a handsome memorial window to her deceased husband in the Minster church, and for a quarter of a century past, had actively forwarded, both by personal effort and liberal gifts, every benevolent scheme that had come within her knowledge. Her wealth was very great,

and her Nugent temper being naturally generous, even to ostentation, she found an unqualified delight in giving away the overplus of her riches which she could not use.

"I cannot take my money with me," she argued; "and it would be nothing to Philip Nugent, or to those Howard Leighs, who have more than enough already, so I might as well enjoy the pleasure of doing good, and of setting a proper example." So she was charitable to a proverb, and set a very proper example.

To go into her house on the Minster Hill was to enter a museum of all that was rare, and costly, and fashionable in those days. In her fine peach-colored drawing-room was collected every variety of handsome and hideous, homely and grotesque, porcelain figure, jar, bowl, and cup; Indian cabinets, Chinese carvings, Japan screens, and French eccentricities over-abounded. Rarely a day passed, that Lilian Carlton did not get into disgrace for upsetting or breaking some invaluable toy in the crowded room; and doubtless the little maid thought her father's solitary house, looking over the churchyard, with its avenues of elms and centuries of dead, by far the happier place.

Lady Leigh had never conceived within her own mind that a child could be otherwise than delighted and proud to live under her beneficent care and instruction. She had represented to Peter Carlton the good that must accrue to his motherless girl, from being trained under supervision such as hers, and though the organist was very reluctant to yield her up, he was, at length, prevailed on to do so, though less by Lady Leigh's arguments, than by little Lilian's own babyish enjoyment of all she had been permitted to see and do during a day spent with her patroness, by way of trial. She had not, however, been long in discovering that happiness does not consist in wearing fine clothes or in living in fine rooms; and then she pined after her father, as a bird in a gilt cage pines after the free air and its companions, until her longing to go back to him broke out in Dorothea Sancton's familiar presence as we have seen. Lady Nugent, who had always felt a secret pity for the little ones under her austere and childless sister-in-law's protection, early discovered Lilian's restlessness, and had almost made up her mind to attempt her deliverance, when Lady Leigh herself, by a startling declaration, soon after gave her an opening to introduce the delicate subject without exciting displeasure.

## VI.

This declaration was announced one afternoon in the peach-colored, pot-pourri-scented drawing-room, where the sisters were sitting after luncheon with the demure gentlewomen whom they retained as companions and secretaries. Though their houses were not ten minutes' walk distant from each other, they frequently exchanged visits of three and four days at a time, bringing these ladies and their respective tapestry frames with them.

When Lady Leigh had any thing particular to say, she always said it without preface, and let it make its own impression; so she spoke now, in a distinct peremptory tone, which made the two dependent gentlewomen metaphorically prick their ears to listen. "Helena, I am seriously inclined to take a boy to bring up; the monotony of a girl's education does not absorb me sufficiently."

"Indeed! Are you wearying of your little maid Lilian?" replied Lady Nugent. "She does not seem to take kindly to her captivity. I have been thinking you would have to release her."

"No such thing! I never allow myself to be overmatched by a child's fantasies. Lilian is very happy and very grateful." The two dependent gentlewomen exchanged looks of commiserating intelligence; one of them, a poor French lady, a refugee, knew to a hair's breadth the amount of happiness and gratitude experienced by those who lived under Lady Leigh's dominion.

"Look at the child now, she is a picture of health and enjoyment," said the self-gratulating patroness of orphans, pointing through the window to the shady garden where Lilian, in direct disobedience to orders, was standing in amongst a bed of white and orange lilies which almost overtopped her golden head. In a minute or two she emerged, bearing a tall flower-covered stem, broken off by the root, and ran away with it down one of the green alleys out of sight. "Young creatures are always uneasy in confinement, but Lilian breathes only free air. You shall hear her express her feelings for herself; Madame Lefevre, please to ring the bell."

The French lady rose and tinkled a little bell that stood within reach of her mistress's hand, and before she had time

to resume her seat, appeared a little, grinning, black page in a sumptuous livery of scarlet and gold. Lady Leigh kept up all the state of her household, exactly as it had been in her husband's lifetime, and, like royalty, she delivered her orders to servants through a medium.

"Tell Sempronius to seek Lilian in the garden, and bring her here, Madame Lefevre." Madame repeated the command, and the black page vanished.

"Yes, Helena; I have serious thoughts of taking a boy to bring up," said Lady Leigh, reverting to her original idea; "I have a liking for boys."

"Since when, Augusta? Philip used to be a daily aggravation to you when he was a boy," replied Lady Nugent.

"You indulged him so foolishly."

Lady Nugent's white cheek flushed as she said, in a deprecating tone: "Severity would have been worse than my over-fondness; our children cannot be made mere automatons of our will. Their hearts and dispositions are worked by springs quite independent of ours."

"If it had pleased God to give *me* children, they should have had no single sentiment, no single feeling independent of me," cried Lady Leigh, emphatically. "They should not have looked, or spoken, or thought save by my permission. Mistress Alice Johnes, you pretend to be a philosophress and student of ethics, tell us, ought not the government of families to be despotic?"

"Your ladyship will be pleased to remember that the human being is not a mechanical contrivance, but a reasoning soul. I would have no despotism, either in families or in kingdoms, unless we had archangels over us," spiritedly replied the dark little Welshwoman.

Lady Leigh smiled sarcastically while Lady Nugent commended her humble companion's reply. Madame Lefevre sighed audibly, and envied Mrs. Alice Johnes her considerate patroness. Hers was often hard to her—hard and bitter. You might have thought that Lady Leigh had met with experiences and disappointments, such as do not, in general, tend to improve our opinion of our species; perhaps my Lord Leigh, now for more than thirty years taking his rest beneath the pavement of the northern transept of the Minster church, with the memorial window glowing blushing over his sculptured virtues, could have told us whether or no it were so.



Sempronius re-entered. "Missa Lilian not in garden, not about anywhere to be seen," announced he, with grinning sable visage, addressed toward Madame Lefevre. She repeated his words exactly as he gave them.

"Tell him to seek her again," was the abrupt reply, and Sempronius disappeared forthwith.

The interrupted conversation was resumed by the ardent little Welshwoman breaking into a respectful panegyric on liberty.

"Liberty!" cried she, with enthusiasm; "Liberty is our very breath of life; take that from us and we die! What a glorious decision, was that of Lord Mansfield, in which he declared that no slave could live on English ground—no slave could breathe English air!"

"Ah! my excellent Mistress Alice, spare us your pet story for once!" interposed Lady Leigh, deprecatingly; "we all know it from beginning to end. Granville Sharp and his interesting negro have our best sympathy and admiration, I assure you, and Lord Mansfield's principle meets our full approval. Let us hear the other side of the question. Madame Lefevre, according to your views, what is liberty?"

"Hélas, my lady, what for you ask me? *La liberté*; it is wild beast anarchy *deguisé, masqué*. *La liberté à nous autres ce n'est pas votre freedom à vous!* Our *liberté*! Have I not seen it ravage my country like a boar out of the forest? Talk to me not of *liberté*, it is the password of bad men to bad deeds! I will not hear it. Our king, our queen, our nobles, *assassinés*; our lands——"

"Never mind the confiscations, madame; they are a thrice-told tale," said Lady Leigh, between a laugh and a yawn. "I am afraid you will never come by your own again, so it is consoling to hear that you condemn liberty and take so kindly to your exile and servitude."

"My *servitude*—ah, *non, non!*" and the poor withered lady dropped her head over her embroidery, repeating the hateful word again and again in every variety of intonation expressive of disgust and weariness. Mistress Alice Johnes, who was well placed and tough of spirit, and who had risen instead of declining in the world, regarded her contemptuously, as the big tears trickled down her high thin nose and then dropped on her lean shaky hands, so busy with the rich carmines of a half-blown rose. After controlling her heat for some moments she was constrained to speak by the

effervescent fervor of her emotions, and addressed the poor stranger with an air of withering rebuke :

"France is not capable of bearing freedom," said she ; "liberty is like a high-mettled steed ; give it air, give it exercise, give it the reason-curbed use of its magnificent powers, and behold in it a perfect work of God, obedient ever to the hand of the master rider ; but confine it, gag it, stall-feed it, maltreat it, and it will surely destroy any that attempt to mount it when it escapes its prison."

"You are grandiloquent in metaphor, Mistress Alice," sneered Lady Leigh ; "now, madame, it is your turn again."

She delighted to pit the two poor ladies against each other, and to hear how they raved ; but this time madame declined the challenge, except to say, with low-voiced fervor—

"There is a difference, a *juste milieu*, between the anarchy of revolution and the anarchy of the military despotism which the Emperor has established. Ah ! my Lady Leigh, all honor, courage, patriotism, are not dead in the breasts of my countrymen ; France will yet be free !"

Sempronius appeared in the presence for the third time.

"Missa Lilian not in garden," repeated he ; "Missa Lilian run away !"

Lady Leigh turned round with an angry frown.

"How dare you say that, sir ? Why should any one run away from me ? Madame, give me my hood, and I will seek the child myself. Helena, lend me your arm," and, clutching her gold-headed stick, she marched away across the hall, leaning upon her sister-in-law, and went out on the sunshiny terrace, below the windows where Lilian had been playing. The two companions presently followed, with their ladies' mantillas, and themselves ready to join in the quest.

"Mistress Alice Johnes, you have almost a man's voice, call the child. She is hiding somewhere among the bushes," said Lady Leigh.

The Welshwoman lifted up a very sonorous tone, but there was no response, though she cried out three times.

"The little rebel ! I will have Hilton whip her soundly when she comes back," said Lilian's patroness, angrily.

"You will never whip her into love of you, Augusta," whispered Lady Nugent.

Those gardens on the Minster Hill were beautiful old

places. The houses stood very high, and the ground descended from them in successive lawns and terraces, laid out with gay flower knots and clumps of evergreens. The afternoon sunshine was now richly pouring through the thick trees, and just as they came out the Minster bell began to ring for evening prayers.

"The little child may have run into the church; she talks for ever of her father and his grand music," suggested Madame Lefevre.

"Perhaps so, but she should not have gone alone; she is disobedient," curtly replied Lady Leigh; but she accepted the offered clue and descended the terrace steps to the street, which was excluded from view by a high wall and double row of sycamores. The street curved round the south side of the hill at the base of the old gardens; the palisaded enclosure of the great grave-yard was its other boundary, and looking straight across the wilderness of mounds and stones to its farther side, several ancient houses showed through the dim sultriness of shadow cast upon them by the Minster church itself. In one of these curious dwellings Peter Carlton had lived ever since he was elected to the office of organist; and from its low-studded door the four ladies now saw him issue, leading naughty, truant Lilian by the hand. The little maiden's golden hair was all uncovered, her white, plump arms were glancing bare, and over her shoulder she carried the lily stem as if it were a sword. She looked so pretty and so happy, so negligent and so fearless, dancing along by her father's side, that Lady Nugent's motherly heart yearned toward her.

"It is only natural, Augusta, do not let us spoil her enjoyment," pleaded she; and Lady Leigh grimly acquiesced.

There was a flagged pathway between two high banks of graves from the old houses to a side entrance of the church, and while Peter Carlton was unlocking the door with his pass-key, Lilian espied the towering figure of her patroness advancing with the other ladies. She broke into a tricksy laugh, shook her head at them mischievously, and then vanished like a sunbeam into the interior gloom. Lady Leigh did not seem very well pleased with this baby defiance; however, she let it pass, and proposed that since they were so near they should go to prayers. Shut up in their dignified stalls, the ladies could see the lily-head nodding over the curtain of the organ loft, and occasionally a tiny

hand drew the red folds aside, and a fair laughing face peeped down to where they sat. When the prayers were ended, and the concluding voluntary was being played, they went down one of the side aisles to the foot of the organ loft stairs, and there waited until Peter Carlton and his little daughter appeared. Peter made them a low reverence as he descended, almost tripping himself up over the uneven stones in the excess of his humility. He was a long-nosed melancholy enthusiast, black-haired and lean, a ludicrous contrast to his bright bud of a child. Lady Nugent regarded his sallow visage with pity, and secretly hoped that he would assert his right to reclaim Lilian; but he did not. When Lady Leigh extended her hand to take possession of the child, he bowed low again and gave it up without demur. Lilian looked into his face for a moment or two with wistful, tear-bright eyes of entreaty, but as he only said—

“You must go, Lily,” and turned away his face, she leant her pretty head against her patroness’s rich silken sleeve, and accompanied her without a word.

The struggle was not harder for Lilian than it was for Peter. Peter owed an unredeemable debt to Lady Leigh, or so his intense gratitude taught him to think. She had found him almost starving, with a sick young wife, a baby, and no work. He had Italian blood in his veins, derived from his mother, who had been a singer and actress; from her, too, he had drawn his passionate love of music, the only vocation he had ever attempted to follow; but this vocation had never found him or his in bread, until Lady Leigh, having assured herself of his personal worth and professional capability, exerted all her influence to get him appointed organist and master of the church choristers. Very soon after his young wife died, and Lady Leigh, thinking to confer upon him yet another kindness, deprived him of his child.

When the whole party were again in the street, and progressing slowly homeward under the shady garden wall, Lady Nugent, in her kindness of heart, made another effort for the little exile.

Lady Leigh was rather impatient of what she had called her sister’s “solicitous crotchets,” but at last she said, in reply to her arguments—

“Well, Helena, if I am successful in getting possession of the boy I have set my mind on to bring up, I *will* let Lilian go.”

"Then you have a boy in view! Who is it?" asked Lady Nugent, in unfeigned surprise.

"I will tell you by-and-by, for here he comes with young George Sancton—observe him well."

The two boys would have passed the stately dowager by had not Lady Leigh, resting on her gold-headed stick, bidden them to stop. She held them in talk several minutes, and then dismissed them with a nod of her head.

"How do you like his appearance? He is a handsome, intelligent looking lad, is he not?" she asked, quietly.

"Who is he, Augusta? You have some mystery under this?"

"Does he remind you of any one? Madame, you may leave us for the present. My sister and I wish to be alone."

The attendant gentlewoman quickly disappeared into the house, Lillian vanished amongst the flowers, and the two ladies, slowly following into the garden, seated themselves on a rustic chair under a wide-spreading tree. Lady Nugent only replied to her sister's last question by a puzzled look.

Lady Leigh repeated, "Does he remind you of any one?"

"Why do you set me riddles? It is Philip he is like," said Lady Nugent, faintly.

"Yes, Helena, and he is Philip's son. He is a twin brother of the boy whom Tom Nugent wrote to me about."

Lady Nugent flushed all over her pale, gentle face: "Who told you so, Augusta?" she asked.

"Dorothea Sancton. He is the boy whom I saw at Miss Kibblewhite's, and it seems that when I was gone he told her his history. She said that when he spoke of his mother he was almost heartbroken."

"Then is that story Dean Mauleverer had heard from his cousin Ford *true*—the marriage at Chinelyn?"

"I am afraid it is but too true—so the lad informed Dorothea. His mother is lately dead, and I hear that she was a niece of old Joshua Hawthorne, the varnish-maker in Maiden Lane."

There was a long silence. Lady Nugent's conscience was deeply wounded for her son. She was self convicted of having indulged him in his wilful ways, until her mother's heart and woman's hand were found far too weak to curb his masterful passions; and here were the fruits of them, suddenly springing up in the declining path of her life to renew the old grief and fret.

"I intend to claim the guardianship of this Robert Hawthorne myself," said Lady Leigh, presently. "We might have been proud to look to such a boy as heir of our house, but as that cannot be, I will make him a soldier and leave him all I have. Others like him have risen into repute, and made their bar sinister to be forgotten, have married well and founded families; why should not he?"

"But, Augusta, might not Philip resent your interference?" said Lady Nugent, timidly.

"What care I for Philip's resentment or Philip's approval! There is nothing but the publicity to annoy us, and I shall brave that rather than let that noble-looking lad be thrown away on such a mean occupation as the one to which he is now condemned. Say no more, Helena, for I shall certainly claim the boy." Lady Leigh rose up with an emphatic thud of her stick upon the ground, and dispensing with the further support of her sister's arm, marched away indignantly to the house. Lady Nugent followed her slowly and sorrowfully.

## VII.

The next day in the cool of the evening, Lady Leigh commanded the attendance of Sempronius, and went down to Maiden Lane to pay a visit to Mr. Joshua Hawthorne. The old gentleman had to be sought for in the office, and, meantime, Mrs. Deborah Eliotson entertained her with obsequious conversation in the parlor. When the head of the firm entered the room, he bowed profoundly, but the gravity of his countenance did not relax. Knowing Lady Leigh's character well, he had a prescience of what she came about, and he was resolved not to comply with her demands; but she, unaccustomed to opposition, and far from anticipating it now, opened her errand without circumlocution.

"Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, you have a young lad with you now, who is a sort of kinsman to us Nugents, and I have determined to adopt him myself," said she, graciously. "I think it a pity that he should be condemned to the obscurity and drudgery of trade. He has good blood in his veins, and merits a better fortune."

"I should regret to displease your ladyship, but I cannot give up Robert Hawthorne on any pretence," was the firm,

but respectful answer. "The obscurity and drudgery of trade have sufficed me, and they will suffice him."

"Sir, you surprise me!" exclaimed Lady Leigh, with raised complexion and resentful glance. "Retain the boy against *my will*?"

"I have said that I should be sorry to displease your ladyship, but I have only to repeat my previous words, I cannot give up Robert Hawthorne on any pretence. He himself would be the last person in the world to desire the change."

"But I would give him such an education and such a profession as would make him a companion for gentlemen. What do you propose to do for him that can compensate for denying him such advantages?"

"I do not acknowledge your ladyship's right to catechise me as to my intentions," replied the old man, stiffly, for Lady Leigh's tone affronted him. "I love the lad, and that is voucher sufficient that I shall do my duty by him."

"I am not satisfied with your answer; I desire to see the boy, and question him myself. He cannot—with his countenance—bear a mind so low as to delight in the mean chaffering of trade. I will not believe it unless I hear it from his own lips."

Old Joshua Hawthorne was far too courteous to note the insulting remarks of a lady who had lost her temper; he quietly desired Mrs. Eliotson to seek the boy, and sat silent opposite to his indignant visitor, until she reappeared with him. Robert had been working at some carpentry under the willing instruction of Tom Aldin, and he came in all dusty and heated as he was; his brown curls pushed away roughly from his broad white forehead, and his cheeks flushed with a sunburnt glow, which became deeper still as he confronted the stately lady seated in his uncle's chair.

"Robert, Lady Leigh is desirous of asking you certain questions; you will answer her entirely according to your own feelings, without any reference to me. I will leave you together for the purpose. Mrs. Eliotson, we will withdraw."

And the head of the firm closed the door, and retired with the housekeeper, whose natural curiosity was extremely disappointed.

"We have met before; you know who I am?" said Lady Leigh, resuming her gentler manner.

"Yes," replied Robert; he looked at her steadily, and tried to harden himself, she all the while thinking what a noble brave face he had.

"Who am I?"

"You are Lady Leigh, the aunt of Sir Philip Nugent of Hadley Royal."

Lady Leigh had anticipated a different answer; she had expected that he would designate her his *father's* aunt.

"True," said she; "I am Lady Leigh, aunt to Sir Philip Nugent of Hadley Royal, and, through him, a kinswoman of your own. It is in the latter character that I wish to speak to you. I have no son—will you come and be as a son to me?"

"Your ladyship forgets that my Uncle Hawthorne has adopted me," replied Robert.

"But you can separate from him. I could open to you an honorable career. You did not know of me nor I of you when he took you. Your brother will have the training, the profession, and the society of gentlemen—why should you be his inferior? You are no true Nugent if you refuse."

"I am no true Nugent, madam. I do not claim their name or their character at all," Robert said, quietly.

"You have their pride, sir, whatever else you lack," retorted Lady Leigh, frowning. "Am I to understand that you abide by your base bartering life?—that you remain where you are and grow into a mere trader, whose highest ambition is to be some day Mayor of Walton?"

To this Robert vouchsafed neither look nor answer—perhaps he could not.

"You do not speak," added Lady Leigh, more gently. "Indeed, yours is a fate which none with Nugent blood in his veins should brook."

"I did not choose the dishonor of having Nugent blood in my veins," said Robert, kindling. "I have neither name nor kindred except my brother, and I have no ambition except to live peaceably in the station where misfortune has placed me."

"You speak well, Robert, but I wish you would come with me. The Nugents have been proud of their left-hand sons before, and they shall be proud of them again."

"While our mother was alive, Cyrus and I elected how and with whom we should live. I shall never alter my determination."



"You may deny us with your lips, but that pride in your heart will always betray you."

"It is enough that it does not tempt me now to leave my uncle Joshua."

Lady Leigh forced a laugh. She liked the boy, and was grievously disappointed at not gaining her will. She resumed her plea still more urgently; recited advantages, indulgences, honors, luxuries, that he would enjoy with her; but from first to last, Robert was unmoved. At length she said, "If you repent of your present resolution, will you seek me?" He could safely promise that he would. Then she added, "And though you will not live with me, will you acknowledge me so far as to come to my house as a friend? Your brother will visit me, and you will meet him."

Robert was sorely tempted, but he said at length, "I would rather Cyrus came to me here."

"You refuse me every thing!" Lady Leigh rose irefully and grasped her stick to depart.

"Madam, I have not thanked you for your intended kindness. I do thank you gratefully," said Robert, "most gratefully."

"I would rather you had accepted it ever so unthankfully."

And so Lady Leigh went her way, chafing over her disappointment, and Lilian Carlton, to Lady Nugent's deep regret, remained still in captivity. Every Sunday, morning and evening, sitting in their stalls at the Minster service, the dowager ladies could look down upon the illegitimate son whom they would have been so glad to call heir to all their family honors. Robert never glanced toward them, but he was often conscious of two pair of age-dimmed eyes watching him; and perhaps the lad had rebellious and ambitious dreams sometimes which tempted him to accept their lofty patronage. Was it the Nugent pride or some worthier impulse that helped him to vanquish them, I wonder. I think it was his keen resentful memory of his mother's wrongs, received from the hands of one of those same right honorable Nugents. Robert Hawthorne was not of a shallow, pliant, forgiving temper, and already he had begun to feel some of the pains and penalties attached to his position.

## VIII.

And he had not yet done being tempted to abandon his fealty to the firm of Hawthorne and Co., if temptation it could be called. One afternoon, while crossing the market-place bound on an errand from Maiden Lane, he suddenly heard himself pursued, and called upon to stop in a voice that made his heart leap. Turning round, he found himself face to face with his brother Cyrus. The two boys grasped hands, but for a moment both were too glad to speak. Then it was,—

“Why, Cyr, you have dropped from the clouds,” and—

“Oh! Robin, how capital it is to see your dear old face!”

And then they looked each other over, Cyrus’s eye catching the homely details of Robert’s every day apprentice dress, but Robert seeing only how Cyrus was grown, and how handsome and happy he appeared.

“I was on my way to Maiden Lane when I saw you,” Cyrus began to explain; “let us get into some shady spot by ourselves, for I have a hundred things to tell you. Oh! Robin, I wish we could be always together; you seem so *natural* to me, you know—not at all like any body else.”

In these hot midsummer days there was no place so cool or shady as the aisles of the Minster church, so the lads plunged through its dark arched gates into the twilight silence of the northern transept, and pacing to and fro, linked arm in arm, proceeded to unbosom themselves of their respective experiences since their separation. Cyrus was always the more fluent talker of the two, but neither of them found any details trivial or uninteresting. Robert learnt the obnoxiousness of the young Leasowes Nugents, and the Rev. Samuel Miles’s personal peculiarities; the delights of Highland glens, midland hunting counties, and London sights; and Cyrus was made acquainted with Uncle Joshua, and Pussy, and Tom Aldin, and Dorothea Sancton. When they came to speak more immediately of themselves, it was observable that they dropped their voices to a lower key; and that, at first, each avoided meeting the other’s eye.

“It is impossible for my father to be kinder to me than he is,” Cyrus said, quietly. “I have never told you yet that he will have me called by his own name, Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent. Indeed, some people regard me as his heir.”

This was the poor lad's own delusion.

"But you will never so regard yourself, dear Cyr? because it could not be in reality, you know," Robert replied.

"Why not?"

"Because Sir Philip Nugent's principal estates are entailed, and go to his cousin Nugent of the Leasowes. My uncle Joshua explained it all to me one evening, and he understands it."

Cyrus looked intensely mortified, and was silent until Robert asked where he was staying in Walton.

"I am at Lady Leigh's. My father went to Lady Nugent's and left me at the Mitre with Mr. Miles, but Lady Leigh came and took me to her house. She is a fierce old woman, but I like her; she told me how you had refused to let her do any thing for you. Why did you Robin? You and I shall be so different as we grow up."

"We need not cease to love each other—that is the only difference for which I should care."

"Or I either. But I say, Robin, is it not strange that Uncle Joshua should be living as a paltry tradesman in the midst of all the Nugents?"

"There is nothing paltry about Uncle Joshua, Cyr, and so you would allow if you knew him. I have sometimes wished he did not live here, but as it cannot be helped, I try not to care."

"It would be an unceasing mortification to me; indeed, I think I could not bear it."

"I am afraid, Cyr, there's many a mortification belonging to our position that we shall have to learn to bear. A score of times or more since I came to Walton have I wished myself the son of the meanest shopkeeper in the place rather than what I am," said Robert, fervently.

"So should I never," was Cyrus's indignant reply. "I have no ambition to be ever so honestly born a clown. You have not forgotten old Scrope's books of plays, have you, Robin?—Shakspeare's I mean."

"No; but I read them less than you."

"I found a volume of the same last night in Lady Leigh's library, and took it out to read. Do you recollect King John?"

"I recollect Prince Arthur and Hubert in it."

"Don't you recollect Philip Falconbridge, too?"

"Yes; I think I do. He was the son of Richard Cœur-de-Lion."

"He was the bastard son of Richard Cœur-de-Lion. He was Plantaganet, as we are Nugent. He had the strength and courage and beauty of his father, as we have of ours. Robin, I am enraged when I think of what we lose, but I am glad when I recall how much more we gain."

"Oh! Cyr, but our mother! Can you ever forget our mother's sufferings?" said Robert, reproachfully.

"I never forget them, Robin. When I think of her, I almost *hate* my father. My whole soul rises in revolt against him. I have a little picture of her copied from one he has; I wish you could see it. Oh! it is such a beautiful face!"

"When was our mother's face not beautiful, Cyr? To me it always was."

At that moment the Minster bell began to ring for evening prayers, and already a few of its regular frequenters were entering at the sunshiny western doorway, which stood wide open. Robert proposed that they should leave the building, and take refuge under the shady elms that bordered its graveyard, but instead of going out of the great doors, they passed through the little postern in the northern transept, and just as they were descending the moist, mossy steps they came in sight of an advancing group; Lady Nugent leaning on her son Sir Philip's arm, and Mistress Alice Johnes following with the prayer and anthem books. At the same instant came up from another direction Dean Mauleverer, a big, rubicund man, a priest of a type now happily worn out at Walton Minster as elsewhere. He bowed with gracious expansion to the living representatives of the family that had patronized him and such as him for generations, greatly to the detriment of the church, and then stared at the two boys.

"Are these the lads I have heard of Sir Philip?" cried he, in a voice husky from high feeding. "Fine lads they are too, and carry their paternity in their faces. You should make this fiery youngster a soldier, and the other one of us. Beg your pardon, my Lady Nugent, but I think I must give your son my absolution." And so the jolly priest swept by with a bow and a grin, and got up in his public office to pray God to have mercy upon all miserable sinners, himself amongst the rest.

The brothers had stepped aside from the pathway to let

the party pass, and Robert, though he looked directly in his father's face, gave no sign of recognition—unless a deep blush might be so called.

Sir Philip and his mother paused, however, and the former said: "I will leave you now, mother, to the care of Mistress Alice Johnes, and join these boys."

"Will you not go to the service? the dean will expect to see you," replied Lady Nugent, scarcely relinquishing his arm.

"I am not in praying mood just now."

"When are you, my son? Oh! Philip, do not let your sin meet you at the gates of God's house and turn you away from it," urged Lady Nugent, with whispered, almost tearful vehemence.

"I am no Puritan you know, mother."

"Let us go back into the church, Cyr," whispered Robert, who overheard both the plea and the reply, and without another word spoken they all entered the building. When Sir Philip and his mother reached their stalls, Cyrus came in too, but Robert betook himself to his own place elsewhere, and when prayers were over he was missing altogether. Sir Philip looked around for him and whispered an inquiry of Cyrus, but Cyrus said that as soon as the voluntary began he had risen and gone out.

## IX.

Sir Philip Nugent was not insensible to the mortification and pain of being thus avoided by Robert Hawthorne, but on the following day, accompanied by Cyrus, he went down to Maiden Lane bent on having an interview with him and Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, with a view, if possible, of urging on them the acceptance of Lady Leigh's proposal.

Robert was at first very reluctant to appear, but, at last, urged by Cyrus, he went into the grim old parlor where his father waited, and permitted himself to be shaken by the hand. Perhaps Sir Philip Nugent had never in his life experienced a more uncomfortable sensation than he received from his son's unwilling response to his greeting. A few months had amazingly developed Robert's intelligence, and with the loving generosity of his age and temper he had elected himself into his mother's partisan. In his calm, deep

nature, underlying all it had of good, there was a burning resentment against his father. He understood now how he must have lied to his deceased mother in every word and in every caress; knew that the whole course of their union must have been one of blind devotion on her part and of systematic treachery on his. To Robert a lie was a lie, whether spoken to men in the public ways or to a woman for the winning of her love, and a lie was the meanest degradation that could blot the name of gentleman. Robert had all this in his mind when he came into his father's presence—the lad could not forgive him what his mother had suffered—would not forgive him.

Sir Philip was a proud man, and when he met the steady look with which Robert coldly regarded him, his feelings were something akin to shame and confusion. By the world at large he was accounted an honorable man, and he had always so accounted of himself; his conscience latterly had refrained from inconveniencing him, but somehow his cloak of conventionalities did not protect him from the sting of his son's unloving regard. Cyrus stood by, feeling the meeting very painfully, and already predicating in his own mind that it would be useless.

It was useless so far as changing Robert's vocation went; he would only reiterate his resolve to remain a member of the firm of Hawthorne and Co., in which, of course, his uncle Joshua supported him. When Lady Leigh was told of his obstinacy, she remarked that he had a churl's soul in a noble's body, and doubtless knew what sphere would best range with his common instincts.

As Sir Philip, more deeply wounded than he would have wished to show, at length rose to depart, Cyrus whispered to his brother, with whom he was standing apart in the window.

"Say good-by *kindly*, Robin, our mother *did* love him, and he is our *father*, you know."

Robert colored high and the tears sprang into his bright young eyes, but he gave his hand to Sir Philip impulsively. Sir Philip stood holding it, but saying nothing, for a minute or two, until Robert looked up into his face with an expression wonderfully like poor Mary's; then he dropped it and kissed the lad's forehead—nature for a moment triumphing over all besides—and went out of the room and out of the house without a word. Cyrus stayed behind for a little

time, and I think the parting of the two brothers was even sadder than that which took place after their mother's death.

They did not meet again until they were grown to manhood, until the shores of youth had receded into indistinctness, and they were out on the deep waters of life's great sea. Sir Philip Nugent conveyed Cyrus abroad for the further advantage of his education, and Robert remained at Walton Minster gathering the experience and skill needful to the future head of the firm of Hawthorne and Co.

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## PART SECOND.



### On the Deep Waters.

"O HEAVEN ! that one might read the book of fate  
And see the revolutions of the times.

—How chances mock,  
And changes fill the cup of alteration  
With divers liquors ! Oh, if this were seen,  
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,  
Would shut the book and sit him down and die.

SHAKESPEARE, *King Henry IV.*



## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

### FAIR WINDS.

"ALL common things, each day's events,  
That with the hour begin and end,  
Our pleasures and our discontents,  
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

"We have not wings, we cannot soar;  
But we have feet to scale and climb  
By slow degrees, by more and more,  
The cloudy summits of our time.

"The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upwards in the night."

LONGFELLOW, *The Ladder of St. Augustine.*

### I.

To be young—to be twenty years old—to have no aches, no pains, no regrets worthy of the name! It is a glorious time, few of us know how glorious until we are young no more!

We are so like travelers with a long journey before them, setting off at our topmost speed in the bright morning, dashing forward impetuous as if the miles would stretch before us to infinity, wearying over the early ways that must be trodden, disregarding the sunny landscape we are passing through, and the wayside flowers we are trampling down, because our eager eyes are fixed on some distant hill where the mid-day seems to shine with dazzling effulgence. The hill-top gained, we behold sterile spots, parched and shadowless as African deserts; it is no more all beautiful than the country we have traversed already—nay, we think it even less beautiful. Looking wistfully behind us, at last we see distinctly the quiet stretches of scenery, the green fields, and woods, and rivulets, the calm light, the flying showers that we made of such small account, and confess in our

hearts that the morning is the best time of the day, and that we have passed over the loveliest district our wayfaring feet had to tread, before we had learnt the wisdom of enjoying and being thankful.

Children, we are impatient to grow up; travelers, we long for our journey's end; old, we would fain put back the swift hands on the dial of Time; resting at strange inns, we grow home-sick and heart-sick, and would fain return. But no! Forward is the word, and God's will be done!

## II.

Cyrus and Robert Hawthorne were no wiser than their fellows. They had dreamed dreams, and seen visions, which some near future had it in charge to realize: we shall know how that future kept its promise by and by. Meanwhile, hope made their hearts light, and their step buoyant, and they addressed themselves to their life-journey with good courage.

Great events had been happening in the world while they were boys; but, at last, after long and cruel convulsions—after revolutions in which kings were overthrown, and princes became as the basest amongst the people—after wars, where thousands of brave soldiers were plowed into the furrows of death, and thousands of innocent homes were made desolate—peace spread her white wings over the earth, and men rested under their shadow in safety. There were poet-giants living in the land in those days—men of spiritual might, heroes in the lists of Parnassus, against whom the belligerent critics ran a tilt in vain! High-seated in the saddle of popular favor, they shook the lance of defiance in their foemen's blinking visage, and rode their career triumphant, unannoyed save by the dust and reek of their own praises. Little smooth-faced innocents stood by, open-mouthed and wide-eared, swallowing the dust, and the reek, and the clamor of the famous ones, until, being dazed, they fancied themselves inspired, and began to pipe forth an echo—an echo exceeding small—of the great men's songs; then mounting the wooden hobby-horse of self-gratulation, they clattered stiff-legged into the arena, casting tinselly gauntlets right and left; but lo! in a turn or two they were overthrown, and their puny lives

trampled out to an accompaniment of horrid shouts and laughter.

Parnassus is strewn with the untimely bones of these slaughtered innocents.

Amidst the throng at its loudest, there one bright day appeared a ruddy-cheeked, amorous David, fair-fronted and courageous. The grizzled warriors recognized in him a revival of their own exuberant youth, and greeted him with cheers. He was bold-eyed as one who fears no man, ruby-lipped, and white-browed as one who will win the love of women. His voice was pleasant to the ear, melodious and touching, the overflow of a full passionate heart, into whose sweetness the tooth of no decay has bitten. The giants bade him ride the race for immortality with them, so the youth sprang upon his fiery courser, and pranced into the *melée* amongst the best, shaking his hyacinthine locks, and crying "Eureka!" ere the struggle was well begun.

Slowly, steadily, young David! bridle thy impetuous pride! the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong! In the dust of the trampled course lies many a stout hero discrowned, overridden, unrecognizable save by the few soiled leaves of bay, clutched in his skeleton hand. The prize hangs high. To gain it thou must reach and look upward—not to the ground where rewards of gold lie for thy taking—not to either hand for mob-applause—but upward and onward, upward and onward!

Dazzled already! Ah, heedless David! not long shalt thou ride with the heroes, unless thou wilt look to thy ways, as all who have traveled far have looked before thee!

### III.

Which being interpreted signifies in plain English, that Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent, when in his twenty-first year, did cause to be printed and published a collection of songs and ballads by him conceived and composed, and that the collection aforesaid was warmly welcomed by the poetry-reading public, praised by the great literary dons, and tenderly handled by the minor critics. This gracious reception not unnaturally elated the youthful aspirant after fame, and filled him with resplendent visions of the future—visions of crowns and glory, such as attend the dawn of every young

poet. But the brightness of his rising did not eclipse the glow of old affection, or lessen its wholesome warmth in his heart. He wished, with innocent, loving vanity, that his mother had been alive to see that day, and his first impulse when the book was ready was to send a copy of it, accompanied by a most affectionate letter, to his brother Robert at Walton Minster; and I think he had more anxiety that the book should please him, than he had pleasure in the admiration of all his other admirers put together.

The volume came to Robert by the hand of Lady Leigh, who had been passing the season at Sir Philip's house in town. The ancient dame arrived at her residence on the Minster Hill late in the evening of a fine June day; but she had brought Cyrus's parcel loose in the carriage, and Sempronius was dispatched to deliver it in Maiden Lane immediately. It had been a busy day at the varnish manufactory, and Robert was only just setting out for a stroll into the fields to refresh himself when he received it, but, altering his intentions, he walked off delightedly with his acquisition to Peter Carlton's.

Peter and he had struck up an intimacy some years before—an intimacy which had ripened into a friendship of habits and sympathy. Many a long discussion had they held on poets and poetry in general, and many a dream had they indulged of the place Cyrus was to take in the ranks of the immortals. The brothers had not met for more than six years, but Robert's love and veneration for Cyrus were as intense as ever, and the organist was the person of all others whom he could best talk to about him. He scarcely felt the ground under his feet, as he sped away toward the Minster and across its burdened graveyard, to the dim old house on its farther side. He opened the door for himself, and stumbled up the dark, wide staircase, into the room where Peter was just settling himself at his organ, to play some favorite anthem in the twilight, exclaiming—

"Light the lamp, Peter! Cyr's book is out at last; here it is—behold it!" and he waved it above his head enthusiastically.

Such a fuss over a brother's book! It sounds very simple in Robert Hawthorne, certainly, to traverse a town at dusk as if he had got wings to his feet, and to burst in on an old man's musical reveries as if with the news of an earthquake. But in those days every body's brother, or sister, or cousin,

had not written a book; people's minds had fermented in another and less peaceable fashion, and produced works of a different character, from the turmoil of which the world was calming down—calming down thankfully, and with the most tame willingness to be amused. There has been a wonderful outpouring of printer's ink in these latter years, but when Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent was young, to have written a book was rather a feather in a man's cap; and Robert, in his loving simplicity, was inclined to regard his brother's as a very fine feather indeed.

Peter Carlton ran out upon the stairs, and called over the banisters to his housekeeper, Tibbie, to bring a light; but she was so leisurely in her movements that they had to wait full ten minutes before the keen edge of their curiosity could be taken off. But at last, with the lamp between them, they sat down, one on either side of the ponderous oak table, and with eager fingers Robert tore off the covers of the precious volume until it lay revealed—a slim, gray, paper-bound octavo with a white label on the back, inscribed—“Poems by C. H. Nugent.”

“Poems by C. H. Nugent,” said Robert, holding it off proudly, to contemplate the effect of the beautiful words at a distance.

Peter clasped his thin, yellow hands under his chin, and repeated them after him with low-voiced solemnity. He could not have spoken otherwise in sight of Robert's flushed face and bright eyes; his young emotion was far too sincere for raillery.

“It is a great epoch in Cyr's life, Peter; he is fairly launched now,” said Robert, warmly. “Who knows how far he may go. He was always ambitious,” and then he opened the book. “‘To my brother! to my brother!’ do you hear, Peter? I knew there was nothing that could ever take his love away from me; dear, dear old Cyr!” and the young fellow kept his hand shading his eyes for a minute or two, looking at the dedication, which wavered up and down as you may have seen light waver on a running water.

“Now for some of the poems,” suggested Peter, after a quite long enough pause.

“Go to your organ, Peter, and make some of your grand music; let me have Cyr's thought to myself first; it seems as if I were going to see into his heart after all these years

of separation. I did not think that I should feel it so," Robert pleaded.

The organist moved away to his instrument, and filled the dusky house with melody to its remotest corner; while Robert, leaning his head upon his hand, turned over leaf after leaf of the little book, greedily devouring every line. Yes; *devouring*. He did not taste and criticise, and taste again, as a connoisseur or cool-blooded critic might do, but he read *all* in perfect faith; that *all* was beautiful. But there were some that charmed him more than others; indeed, I fear that there were several resounding, speculative, spasmodic strains that he hardly understood; but there were others full of a tender, human interest, many of them touching on familiar scenes of long ago, and dear old associations which would have hallowed the rudest rhymes ever tyro penned. "The Graveyard on the Cliff," was a picture of that silent place where their mother lay buried; the humble church, with its background of elms and chesnuts, the calm sea far below, creeping over the shingles with a soft, sighing sound, as if it spoke out of the depths of its great heart consolation to mourners, rose up before Robert's memory as vividly as the reality. He saw it, and the green mound and the low headstone, and the sunshine glancing through the thick trees to brighten its old time-mossed walls. There was another piece, very touching and pathetic. "She who loved us;" also a reminiscence of their mother, which caused the tears to swell hotly into Robert's eyes; and when he came to the following verse—the last in a poem on their own boyhood—he was fain to dash the glittering drops away with his hand. The simple lines had the prevision of what might be in them, and sounded like an appeal:—

"We have but each other, Robin,  
In the wide, wide world to trust;  
For the love of our mother, Robin,  
Let us be true and just:

"True and just to each other Robin,  
Whatever ill tongues may say;  
Hoping the best of each other, Robin,  
Through the darkest and dourlest day."

"Only be you as faithful to me, Cyr, as I'll be steady to you, and neither of us will ever want a trusty friend," cried Robert.

"I believe that; I do believe that, indeed, Robert," said



Peter, from his place at the organ; he had paused a moment, and glanced round, to see what chance there was of his having his turn at the poetry books. No chance at all yet; Robert had not nearly finished with it, short as most of the pieces were.

But there were a few long ballads treating of love and courage, and all high and holy deeds and passions; there were some sweet lyrics, breathing music even in the silent lines, and some fierce denunciations of social shams and tyrannies, that betrayed the hot young blood. Over all there was the richness, the wildness, the exuberance of an unchastened fancy; but from first to last, there was not one mean or coward thought, one weak or wanton sentiment. As Robert read, his pride in his brother increased; his heart glowed within him.

Meanwhile, Peter Carlton continued to play his deep, resounding strains; and, as he played, his lean, sallow countenance was all transfigured to an air of nobleness. Every feature, every limb of him in its acute tension, bespoke the enthusiast in his art. He was no longer in the low-ceiled, panelled, age-begrimed room, environed by every-day signs of use and homeliness, but in some grand old minster waking the sonorous echoes of its ghostly aisles. Long rolling in the arched roof, the melody came back to him as from another sphere, softened and refined. When he ceased at last, Robert found that he had been unconsciously listening for some time past with the poetry book shut. Peter sat silent a minute or two, moving his long fingers over the keys without eliciting any sound, and then turned to his young friend.

"You are a wizard, Peter; you beguiled me away from Cyr's 'Dream of the Angels,'" said Robert, reopening the page.

"The music chimed in with the song, Robert—the music chimed in with the song," replied the organist. "Music and poetry are termed sisters. Read on now, and let me hear your brother's golden words."

Robert needed no second bidding. Cyr's golden words, as Peter was pleased to call them, flowed from his tongue melodiously. He read *The Dream*, which he had chosen out already as his supreme favorite, with deep feeling for its mournful tenderness. It was homely and poor in comparison with many of the pieces, but oh! how it touched him and the elder man too.

"Let me hear that again, Robert," the organist once interrupted him to say, and Robert repeated the passage :—

"Through the mists of the Hereafter,  
In the Land Eternal dwelling,  
Beyond the flood, the bitter flood of death,  
Beyond the dark and turbid swelling.  
Of all earthly strife;  
They are waiting for us, watching,  
Watching, longing, hoping, praying,  
In the Land Eternal!

"All who loved us, all our darlings,  
Gone before us o'er the deep;  
Moving through our lives as shadows,  
Dim as visions of our sleep.  
Live now the better life.  
We shall see their holy faces,  
We shall hear their loving voices,  
In the Land Eternal!"

"Lilian's mother is there, Robert," said Peter, softly; "she was scarcely more than a girl when she died."

There was a few minutes' pause, and then Robert read on to the end of the poem.

"I am not sure that the creed your brother seems to have got hold of will *quite* square with the Protestant faith," the organist observed dubiously, and Robert himself seemed rather puzzled at some of the closing sentiments of the piece. "However," added Peter, cheerfully, "we must allow all thoughtful young men, thoughtful young poets especially, to have their speculations. It is a phase of mind they pass through as wine passes through fermentation, to become clearer and stronger in the end."

Peter's argument appeared no sounder than Cyrus's religious views, but Robert suffered it to pass, and Peter went on to say what strange hearts those people must have who believe that we shall carry none of our earthly affections and interests into the other life. "When I think of dying, my dearest hope is to see Lucy again," he said, pathetically. "Ay, and I *shall* see her! Heaven would be no heaven to me, but a place of strangers, if I did not see her sweet face first of all."

"Well, Peter, it is lucky for both of us that we are not bound to accept the vagaries of our great preachers as revelations. Dean Mauleverer gave us a picture of hell in his last Sunday morning's discourse—you would hear it?"

"Yes, I have heard it three times, but I am in nowise scared *yet*. Robert, isn't it a marvelous thing how men,

learned in most other matters, can get up into a pulpit and string together sentence after sentence as hollow as a drum, and lies every one, attributing to the great and merciful God acts that in a man we should have no scruple in calling devilish? False interpreters are they surely of the words of Him who is justice, mercy, truth and love beyond all our understanding. There are awful things scattered up and down in His book, but I leave 'em alone. In my own individual person I have far more need of His tenderness than of his judgment, and I've a real comfort in reflecting that neither Dean Mauleverer nor any other member of any one of the many sects into which the Christian Church is split nowadays will have a voice on the great judgment day, unless it be to cry for mercy on themselves."

"We may all be grateful for that. Hard measure would some of them deal to each other if they had the chance. Charity's garments are of fashion very short and scrimp as some denouncing pietists fit them by the line and rule of their own creed."

"A just observation, young man, a very just observation. Christianity, which is a system of love and charity embodied, was made for a universal world, not for a walled-in screed of it, as first one and then another new-light apostle preaches. But go on with the poems, Robert, for it seems to me that we shall get as heterodox as Cyrus if we discuss these questions any longer, and a heterodox organist who dare rail at deans will not reign long in the loft of Walton Minster."

"But it is late, Peter—you know my uncle's rules; I must be going home."

"You are all in good time; it is only striking half-past nine by the Minster now. If you wait, we shall have Lilian—the child will not go to bed without running over for five minutes to see her old father when she has been so long away. So read on to pass the time."

Robert opened the book and was just about to resume, when through the window, set wide to admit the summer evening air, a rush of light feet was heard on the pavement below. Peter stalked to the door and opened it with a hasty jerk. There was a flash and flutter of something white against the blackness of the yawning stair, and then Lilian came in.

## IV.

Lilian came in; a slender, shy, virginal thing, rosy with delight at her return to her father after a three months' absence; pleased to be told that she had grown taller, older, prettier; pleased to see him so glad, pleased with every thing; a creature fair as a flower, and full of the frolic of childhood just merging into sweet maidenhood; out of breath with racing down the Minster Hill and across the grave-yard, her dark hood flown back from her head, her mantle clasped at the throat with one tiny gloveless hand; not a trace of travel weariness about her; body and spirit radiant with the verve and glow of youth.

When she had embraced her father, she glanced toward Robert Hawthorne, who stood up and bowed before her less in recognition than in homage, and she returned the courtesy with the formal stateliness of her fine breeding. A moment or two, and then, as if the occasion called for something more, she said:

"I saw Mr. Cyrus, your brother, the day before we left London. Have you received the present Lady Leigh was to bring you from him?"

"Yes, Sempronius brought it to Maiden Lane this evening," and Robert showed the volume in his hand.

"I know it—it is his poetry. Every body was talking about it in town. They say it is full of genius."

Robert colored high with gratification at the words from such beautiful lips.

"You know Cyrus well?" said he, eagerly. "Tell me what he is like now—it is so long since I have seen him—not since we were boys."

"What is he like?" repeated Lilian, with a reflective, pains-taking air. "He is like Sir Philip Nugent in the face, but he is not so tall; he is not so tall as you, and he is dark complexioned. He has an ardent fiery look, Lady Leigh says, not the look of a common-place person at all. Every body admires him, and every body likes him. Sometimes he is very lively and amusing, but not always, and I think he is *very* proud."

"Poor Cyr, so he was long ago, but he was always a favorite—nobody could help loving him," said Robert, gratefully.

Here Peter interposed, asking, "Well, Lilian, let me hear something about yourself now. What charmed you most in Babylon the Great? Did you hear any fine music? did you go to any grand *sights*?"

"Both music and sights enough, father, and I had some lessons with masters. It was a pleasant time, but I am glad to be home again."

Peter Carlton caressed his daughter and told her she was a good girl, and he hoped they would live by them two selves some day. Meanwhile Robert Hawthorne passed unobserved from the room and left them alone. Then Lilian's tongue was loosed to good purpose, and she told her father of all the great singers and musicians whom Lady Leigh had taken or sent her to hear. Lady Leigh was very liberal in encouraging her *protégée's* taste for music. This was Peter's pet subject, and his poor ears ached with envy to hear them too. But for him there were no delightful holidays for visiting that far-off London, and no spare ten-pound notes to carry him there either.

"I shall die without beholding my mother's Italy, and without hearing any of the famous men and women you talk about so familiarly, Lily," said he, half laughing, half sighing.

"Who knows, father? you may become quite a pilgrim, and go to pay homage at all the shrines, living and dead, that you love to think of."

"Who knows, indeed, Lily, when we cannot see a hand's breadth into the future? But come and listen; I have been getting up this glorious mass for you, and I am sure you will like it. You must hear a part to-night;" and the enthusiast moved off to his organ. Lilian had promised Lady Leigh not to stay long, but she could not resist her father's wish to give her pleasure; so she lingered and lingered, until a full hour had elapsed. The moon was up and shining brightly when Peter took her home and left her at Lady Leigh's garden door. She had to receive a sharp reproof from her patroness, but then she had her reward in thinking she had made her father happy.

## V.

Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, on hearing of Lady Leigh's civility to Robert, told him that it was incumbent upon him to go and deliver his thanks in person; and, with less reluctance than might have been anticipated, the young man donned his Sunday suit and went. Sempronius, as he afterward confessed, mistook him for a gentleman and ushered him straight to her ladyship's morning room, where she received her most familiar friends.

Lady Leigh was sitting in her great tapestry chair with her gold-headed stick leant up beside her, dictating a letter to Lilian Carlton at the writing-table, and at the same time wielding two immensely long ivory knitting-needles, with which she had but a few minutes before chastised a black-eyed little damsel, who was now ornamenting a remote corner of the room and scowling at her patroness over her shoulder like an incipient thunderstorm. She was the last *protégée* of the Walton benefactress of orphans, a child of half-Spanish blood, with a thin olive cheek, lips like the scarlet pomegranate, and a mass of loose hanging, rather coarse black hair. If excitement was what Lady Leigh coveted in the management of her charges, Lola certainly seemed likely to give her enough of it. Poor Madame Lefevre was not there; Death had kindly dispensed her from further exile and further servitude, and dismissed her home; but instead of giving her a successor, as Lilian Carlton grew up into a fair, intelligent, gently-nurtured girl, her patroness gradually advanced her to the post of half companion and half pet, and found herself greatly advantaged thereby.

As Robert Hawthorne entered the room Lady Leigh immediately recognized him, and a deep red suffused her dark face as she loftily returned his bow of profound respect. They had never met since, as a boy, he had rejected all her offers of patronage; but she remembered that time much more vividly than he did, because it had been to her ever since a secret mortification and disappointment. Perhaps even yet she felt a grudge against him on account of it, for she was not a woman of a placable temper. She waved her hand toward a chair as a sign that she wished him to be seated, and bade Lilian Carlton retire to a distant table. Robert colored too, and the speech of elaborate thanks that

he had been composing and polishing ever since he left the breakfast table in Maiden Lane entirely slipped his memory, and he said, with a straightforward simplicity which was both more pleasing and more effective—

( "I have come to thank your ladyship for remembering me and my brother's parcel when you arrived last night."

"Will you not be seated?" said the great lady, rather softened. "I never forget my friends' commissions, and your brother Cyrus is a favorite of mine. You have read his little book through already—that I scarcely need ask."

"Yes, last night, before I slept."

"Well, it is a pretty beginning for him. He is one of the most promising and attractive young men I have ever known. He is already distinguished, and if he goes on as well as he has begun, his own genius will override all obstacles. But are *you* pleased or disappointed? I tell Cyrus that his book is less brilliant than himself; and I want to know what the melancholy vein in it signifies. Is it the intuitive perception of genius into the evils to come? I remark that young poets are mostly dismal—what are they dismal for?"

"I cannot enlighten your ladyship, but I think I can understand my brother."

"The poetic element is not strongly developed in you; if I remember rightly, you were always devoted to the prose of life?"

Robert bowed assent to this sarcasm, and, glancing toward the other end of the room, he encountered Lilian Carlton's eyes. They immediately reverted to her secretary work, but not before he had seen the wistful, half-laughing curiosity they expressed. Lady Leigh detected the momentary meeting of these two pairs of young eyes and coughed ominously; she perceived that the devotee of the prose of life had soul enough to feel the influence of maiden beauty.

( "Lola, if you are good, you may come out of the corner and go play," said she; and a moment after, "Lilian, go with her."

Robert furtively watched Lilian's gentle movements as she put her papers together, and acknowledged her formal courtesy with a bow as formal. But once or twice after she was gone out, he answered Lady Leigh's remarks at very queer cross purposes, while he was speculating internally when and where he should see her again; and having his

attention fixed on the window, he presently observed her with Lola going down the shrubbery; all at once remembering that he had accomplished his mission of presenting his thanks to Lady Leigh, it struck him that he ought to go. This time she said not a single word of his coming again, and perhaps the young man felt a little mortified.

The dark little girl and Lilian were gathering posies in the borders as he passed on his way to the gate, and Lilian looked up at him with a smile, as if she would like to speak were the chance given her. Robert paused, of course, and asked if she thought her father well when she saw him the night before—he was not usually bashful, but it was strange how confused he got over the common-place question. Lilian replied that she thought her father looking very well, and that she thanked Robert very much for his kindness to him in her absence.

There was a shrill imperative tinkle of Lady Leigh's bell as she spoke, and little Lola exclaimed, with mischievous, precocious malice—

“My Lady Leigh sees you from her window—that ring is for you, Lilian; come away!”

Lilian dropped her flowers from her gathered-up apron in the sudden jerk Lola gave her arm, and before Robert could collect and restore them to her, Lady Leigh's bell sounded again. She went off hastily, half laughing, and Robert could not be quite sure whether the glow on her face was a blush or merely a soft reflection from the rose-colored bows under her hat. She had a lovely face, whichever it was; such a serene, bright face as will haunt an unoccupied imagination weeks and months after it has passed from actual vision—haunt it so steadily, so pertinaciously, that, at last, the heart takes its impression too, and holds it as a precious memory.

Robert Hawthorne's imagination of twenty was susceptible to beauty, as most young men's imaginations are, and Lilian Carlton's face began to blend itself from this day forth with many a deeply cherished though long unspoken thought. If he had possessed his brother's genius, he would have rhymed her into immortality—rhymed upon her as a divinity most likely; that being the light in which the youthful mind inclines to contemplate what it adores. The divinities do not become woman until by and by. It is not till the smoke declines that the fire burns ardently—not till airy fancies evaporate that passion begins to glow.



## VI.

Most men's and women's lives advance only step by step along tracks beaten level already by thousands, by millions of mortal feet that have trodden them through shine and shower and ceased from the earth generation after generation, in weariness and quietness. Great events are not common in individual experience; we may sometimes think they are, but it is that we each of us magnify our private joys and sorrows into a vast importance, and only in sight of the grand consummation of all things do they diminish to their real weight and worth. Here and there one straying from the highway falls over a precipice and is lost; another climbs a mole-hill and fancies himself a giant amongst his fellows; a third, with the seal of God on his forehead, leaves light behind for the guidance and warning of wayfarers yet to follow. But the mass walk, or stumble, or crawl along, undistinguished and undistinguishing; no one knowing their numbers, no one seeing their cares, trials, and temptations, no one heeding them but the All-Father. We have been told how He regards them; how He discriminates each unit of the moving myriads: and, I suppose, on an occasion, most of us can make shift to remember and confess it; confess it in general terms, that is; admitting that we are all of one common clay, that we have all the same beginning and the same ending—the same bodies to cherish and the same souls to save.

But from the supercilious tone each caste, even yet, adopts toward those below it we may well doubt the acceptance of these lip-acknowledged truths in hearts whose pride they fail to leaven. It is a curious study to observe how each little clique of humanity has its lower class to look down upon with a comfortable superiority. How the wholesale dealer in penny wares ignores the retail vender thereof; how the spruce professional holds himself aloof from vulgar trade; and how the great man, the patriarchal squire of many descents, traceable back for centuries, the great man high above them all, esteems them all alike, and clans them *en masse* as the middle orders. Yet the shades of difference are infinite and infinitesimal; only we must be dwelling amongst them to discern them: from such lofty eminences

as those on which forty years ago stood my Lady Leigh they are quite imperceptible.

The opinions she held and expounded have not yet ceased to prevail amongst remote and semi-civilized communities—nay, let me be bold and say at once that they have not ceased to prevail wherever they prevailed when she lived and reigned in Walton. Caste is as strong as ever, though exclusivism may have lowered its head and partaken occasionally of humble-pie with quite low-born people, but in her day it was a power in the state. The skillful surgeon who saved her ladyship's life in more than one grievous sickness, came to her ladyship's backdoor, and talked to her ladyship's butler in the servant's hall until summoned to feel her ladyship's pulse. The Reverend Paul Wilson, a devout, learned, hard-working, young curate, the son of a small farmer in the neighborhood, a foundation boy at the grammar school, a prize man and fellow at college, shared her ladyship's luncheon occasionally, but never her solemn repasts of state with far less worthy pillars of the Church; nevertheless, when the waters of affliction were stirred about her ladyship's soul, it was at his lips that she sought her spiritual help and consolation. He had a gift that way, she said, and must be a blessing amongst the poor and distressed. In her own sight and in that of Walton generally, she was a highly consistent Christian woman, but she would have been astonished and indignant had any one dared to suggest that these people were her equals, perhaps *more*—perhaps her superiors in all that constitutes real worth. It has been said before that my Lady Leigh's prejudices were very strong. To the really poor and humble she was charitable, considerate, and kind, though domineering; but a *shopkeeper* she could not abide; a shopkeeper in the abstract, that is; for to the tradespeople whom she herself patronized she was very civil. She uttered the word "shopkeeper" with contempt. To her imagination it presented ideas of vulgar, ostentatious wealth amongst the best, and of ignorance, arrogance, coarseness of mind, coarseness of manners, greed, overreaching, and meanness amongst the baser sort—all the odious, petty vices from which the refined mind revolts. She could not have matched her plausible generalities with a tangible fact through all the round of her experience, but that was of small consequence. My Lady Leigh's ideal of a shopkeeper was so and so, upset it who could. The appearance of young Robert Hawthorne

in her own house had awakened this slumbering dislike in her mind. In the afternoon it happened that Lady Nugent visited her sister-in-law, and after more interesting themes had been exhausted he became the subject of conversation. Lilian Carlton and Mistress Alice Johnes were both in the presence.

"Helena, I have had Cyrus's brother here this morning; I had brought him a little book of poems, and he came to acknowledge it," said Lady Leigh, casually.

Lady Nugent exclaimed—"Indeed!" and looked for further information.

"He is a superior young man; quite out of his place as a shopkeeper; but, I suppose, as he grows older and is more mixed up with that sort of people, he will become just as vulgar and coarse as the rest of them."

Mistress Alice Johnes seemed fidgeted; she had shop-keeping cousins in Wales; and even Lilian colored a little, and looked at her patroness with something very like a sparkle of anger in her beautiful eyes.

"Why vulgar and coarse, Augusta?" remonstrated Lady Nugent. "I always liked his countenance and air."

"He has a fine person; indeed, he is handsomer than Cyrus—but I am not speaking of that. His tone must be bad."

"Is his manner obtrusive? What do you mean?"

"No, not obtrusive; his manner is quite what it should be. No, not quite what it should be for a shopkeeper, but only quite what it should be for—for himself, in fact. He has the same spirit he had when a boy, and I can see that he forgets nothing."

"He shows self-respect, Augusta, that is it, and therefore I do not see why he need sink at all. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, who has had his bringing up, is a highly deserving person, and, yes—you may laugh, Augusta, but I do not know anywhere a more courteous old man—he has a fine manner—you have said so yourself before now, and only half in jest."

"I admit it—he is quite an old beau; I do not know where he learnt his graces."

"Allow them to be innate; good feeling and good manners are rarely separated. Perhaps Robert employs his leisure in some of those scientific or artistic pursuits that Philip says are rather cultivated amongst young men now—

adays; collecting geological specimens or butterflies, or classifying plants, I mean; or perhaps he reads, and reading always elevates the tone of people's minds."

Lady Leigh smiled again indulgently, and with these suggestions Robert Hawthorne was dropped quietly back into his obscurity.

## VII.

I feel bound in honesty to confess, however, that Robert Hawthorne did not sustain and improve his mind as Lady Nugent encouraged her sister-in-law to hope. His acquaintance with geology was limited to a vague recollection of the treatises he had read on the sunny door-step of the old schoolhouse at Chinelyn, under Master Scrope's supervision, and his knowledge of butterflies and flowers to observations made during field and wayside walks with Dorothea and George Sancton, after the long day's work in Maiden Lane was ended. On Sundays and winter nights he read a good deal; but his taste, and indeed his opportunities, lay chiefly amongst old-fashioned books, such as were also his uncle's favorites. These he knew thoroughly; the standard poets—read for Cyrus's sake—Izaak Walton's *Lives*, George Herbert's and Bishop Leighton's works, and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* were familiar to him, and from his preferring these and such as these to lighter books, it will be understood that the tone of the young man's mind was grave—almost too grave for his years—and possibly rather narrow. You see, he had not had the advantage of an enlarged education, and while still very young, he had been fixed down amongst the practicalities of what was to be to the end his station in life.

People who do not know this kind of existence, would hardly believe how sufficing it is when encountered consistently and conscientiously; how it can even stave off the boredom which will often assail actively pursued pleasure, as well as luxurious do-nothingness; how, in fact, good men, men who, with wider opportunities, might have been great, will go through with it for their threescore years and ten, and die in the satisfaction of having done their appointed duty in their day and generation, full as well as men of far higher mark in the world. Robert Hawthorne suited his condition, and it suited him. His boyish discontents had

vanished from it as morning mists vanish when the sun strengthens to midday heat.

A full number of hours' work on work-days and leisure evenings, all the more precious for their brevity, carried him on insensibly from week to week, and month to month. In and out at Peter Carlton's, in and out at Miss Kibblewhite's, had been for a year or two back his liveliest enjoyments. He was very fond of George Sancton, and he looked upon Dorothea as a most sage and pleasant elder sister, and all the family at the tea-shop, including a little dogges called Prim, which Dorothea had recently adopted, were very fond of him. As for that fantastical old woman, Mrs. Deborah Eliston, she regarded him with as little favor as ever, only she had grown more cautious about how she attempted to do him any disservice.

You may think these but bald materials wherewith to furnish forth the opening of any man's life, but is not every life full of a pettiness of detail, a continuous monotony of repetition? This is the well-trodden road we all travel, while throbbing in every breast amongst us is a heart to love, to endure, to enjoy, and to suffer; and let the track be rough or smooth, high or low, there will be times on the journey when every wayfarer's heart will expand to embrace a joy or contract under the sting of a sharp agony, and Robert Hawthorne shall no more escape than his fellows.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

## EBB AND FLOW.

"**THERE** is a garden in her face,  
 Where roses and white lillies grow ;  
**A** heavenly paradise is that place,  
 Wherein all pleasant fruits do grow ;  
 There cherries grow that none may buy,  
 Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

" Her eyes like angels watch them still,  
 Her eyes like bended bows do stand,  
 Threatening with piercing frowns to kill  
 All that approach with eye or hand  
 These sacred cherries to come nigh  
 Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry."

*An Hour's Recreation in Musick.*

RICHARD ALLISON. 1606.

## I.

**THE** feast of St. Wilfred was always kept as a high day and holiday among the richest and poorest of the people of Walton. The Minster bells rang it in cheerily, before the drowsy town was half astir, and every body rose up with festive intentions. These homely merry-makings are gone out of fashion nowadays ; we have learnt to enjoy ourselves in a severer and discreeter manner ; but our grandfathers and grandmothers, in the middle class especially, made of them great events ; made of them times for reunion of scattered kinsfolk, for the healing of quarrels, and bringing together again of divided friends. The feast fell early in August, when the trees about the market-cross were full of a dusky green shadow, when the last of the hay-harvest was ingathered, and the first of the reaping was not begun ; so that the country people were free to come in crowds to partake of the moderate dissipations of the fair times.

The bow window of old maid Kibblewhite's best parlor overlooked on this occasion the busiest scene of all the year. The swing-boats, the whirligigs, the shows, with their discordant bands of music, and delusive exterior delineations

of giants, dwarfs, and two-headed beasts, were ranged along the upper end of the market-place, and skirting the pavement stood the stalls of children's toys, of sweeties for the treating of sweethearts, with fluttering warblers, dream-books, and fortune-telling books, in gorgeous covers, hanging from the jaths that supported their awnings. Mistress Nannie Brigget and her *commères* abandoned for the nonce their baskets of plump poultry and fresh eggs, and sat, like venerable Pomonas, amidst teeming stores of fruit, ripe and luscious, rosy and purple and golden, dealing out lavish ha'porths to the youngsters that patronized them. Market-day or fair-day Nannie Brigget never lacked excess of customers; but the favorite who always had the pick of her treasures at St. Wilfred's was Dorothea Sancton.

From early morning, Dorothea kept a casual watch upon the stands round the Cross until she saw her ancient friend established among her blushing heaps of fruit; then away she went with her basket to cull of the choicest to furnish forth the hospitable table of old-maid Kibblewhite, who entertained that day relatives, friends, and select customers amongst the farmers' wives according to her immemorial practice. Any time for six or eight years back Dorothea had supported the burden and responsibility of this important gathering, and very well she had supported it too; for as she gained in years she gained also in gravity and solidity of person and character.

Nannie Brigget used always to greet her on St. Wilfred's privileged morning with the same pertinent questions—"Well, Mistress Dorothy, *who* ha' *yo* gotten to gi' ye yer fairings to year?" But Dorothea never needed to blush; for, while her young companions were "wooded, an' married an' a'," she still remained uncourted in her old aunt's ingle nook; her stiff tiers of curls losing annually a little of their natural gloss, and her cheeks becoming less rosily variable each successive season. Her brother George was quite the young man now, with a sanguine young man's amiable appreciation of the charms of blue eyes, coral lips, and plump contours, in the person of little Nellie Constant, the bachelor clerk's housekeeping niece; and her friend Robert Hawthorne had long since overtopped her by a very handsome head and shoulders. She used sometimes to say, with a laugh that was not all mirth, that she thought she was growing down in the world. But, never mind, Dorothea, keep a

good heart! There will come a St. Wilfred's some day, if not this year, nor the next, nor the next after that, when your fit work will be given you to do and your pre-ordained vocation will be discovered; when you will bless God and be thankful; though if they were revealed to you now, you might be tempted to rebel, and to protest that they were a long way from realizing any of your visions of happiness.

But if Dorothea had not her one special donor of fairings—no particular Johnny who “promised to buy her a bunch of blue ribbons to tie up her bonny brown hair”—she had many old friends who never forgot her. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne and Mr. Reuben Otley always made her a present in the name of her father, their former servant, which kept the thrifty and prudent damsel not only in blue ribbons, but in more substantial attire, from one St. Wilfred's to another, and Robert Hawthorne, from the first of their acquaintance, had always esteemed himself privileged to come with an offering in his hand on this particular festival. At first, it was only a sixpenny red-velvet pincushion, heart-shaped and stuffed with bran, until it was as hard as a stone; but as he grew older and possessed ampler pocket money, he had gradually developed a generous taste in shell-work boxes, Russia leather housewives, and even little articles of personal adornment, by which Dorothea of late years had come to set great store, treasuring them in a place by themselves and letting them grow as old-fashioned as if they had come out of the ark, before she could prevail upon herself to put them to their natural use. Dorothea Sancton was not a sentimental character, but she sometimes had rather soft and sentimental feelings, as she contemplated Robert Hawthorne's boyish gifts—fairings as he called them—sentimental feelings which would have astonished Robert had he been vain enough to suspect them, which he was not. The lad always had a modest and humble appreciation of himself, but as the manly down on his cheek darkened, he, too, had his secret worship of one bright particular star, and all the other stars in the firmament shone for him in vain; even the domestic lustre, Dorothea, was dull and earthly in comparison with Lilian. At this date, when Robert Hawthorne was twenty, she was scarcely gay fifteen; as innocent and thoughtless, and willful and petulant, as was the little Lilian he and George Sancton had coaxed out of her sorrow six years ago, by chairing her round Miss Kibblewhite's parlor, sitting on their crossed arms.



## II.

Miss Kibblewhite's dinner always took place at the primitive hour of noon, and before two o'clock all the guests were again dispersed to visit shops or stalls as their taste inclined, and Dorothea was free to enjoy what had long been to her the pleasantest part of the day. The doings of fairs please young folks of all conditions, I believe, and Lady Leigh's *protégées* were no exceptions to the general rule. As none of the stir penetrated to the seclusion on the Minster hill, she, therefore, permitted them to accept Miss Kibblewhite's annual invitation to sit in her bow window and look out upon the noisy Market-place while the fun was at its height during an hour or two of the afternoon. Under the escort of Mistress Hilton and Sempronius, now become a pompous serious footman, Lilian and Lola arrived as usual, and having handed them over to the safe custody of Dorothea, serving-man and serving-maid went off to spend their own holiday in inspecting the interior of the shows.

Dorothea, as a matter of course, always kept a reserve of Nanny Brigget's finest fruit for her pet Lilian and little Lola, and they enjoyed it as thoroughly as any of the ha'penny-spending urchins in the turmoil below. Lilian appreciated a holiday with Dorothea, who was mother and elder sister and friend all in one to her, and Lola's swarthy cheeks and great black eyes glowed with the exhilarating sense of a rare freedom. It was tacitly understood by Lady Leigh, that while her children were in Miss Kibblewhite's best parlor, none of the old maid's more homely friends should be admitted there, and great was Dorothea's dismay when Robert Hawthorne—full three hours earlier than it was his custom to pay his visits—walked up stairs and in amongst them with a pretty French basket, containing a measure of nuts, in his hand, and told her he had brought her some fairings.

It was a very hot sunshiny afternoon and Lilian had flung off hat and pelerin, and was seated upon a low footstool with her arm on the windowsill, and her round dimpled chin resting upon it, while her pretty soft eyes brightened over the humors of the fair. She blushed a little, but she certainly laughed, and Robert, though at first disconcerted by Dorothea's look of surprise, drew up a chair into the bow,

and, pouring the nuts into her lap, invited the girls to crack and eat. Now Lilian liked nuts—but she was rather shy or proud, or, perhaps, she was only reluctant to crack Robert's nuts, for she *said* she did not care for them much. Not so Lola. Dropping on her knees in front of Dorothea, she plunged her hand amongst them, and set her white little teeth to work with all the skill and vivacity of a squirrel—utterly repudiating her turn at the crackers, a solitary pair, which furnished Miss Kibblewhite's establishment.

Robert did not eat any himself, but he was very dexterous in discovering the largest kernels and extracting them whole, an operation which Lilian furtively observed, observing also the length and beauty of his hands, which were true Nugent hands, and wondering how, as a tradesman, he could keep them so white and perfect in shape; for she had some very queer mistaken notions of his occupations: she, perhaps, thought that in private life he became as soiled and grim as old Tom Aldin; or that he slaved bodily at making casks and filling them, and that he washed his face at the pump in the yard and changed his coat and took off a great apron before he appeared in the street—which was not *quite* the fact. When Robert had made a little heap of these best kernels, he divided them and offered one share to Dorothea and the other to Lilian, and this time Lilian made a rosy tinted cup of her two hands and permitted him to pour them in, afterward munching them up with great apparent relish.

"You *do* like them," said Robert, with a fine blush and a little air of pleased excitement, and Lilian nodded and said, "Yes."

"All gone!" cried Lola, tossing up a handful of the empty shells, "All gone!" and Robert sallied forth to buy another measure.

"I am afraid Lady Leigh would be displeased if she knew of Robert Hawthorne being here," suggested Dorothea, doubtfully.

"Oh, never mind! it's fun!" said Lola. "I like him; he is Cyrus's brother."

Lilian said nothing, but only looked out of the window to where Robert was standing at a stall receiving the nuts. He came back up-stairs ever so many steps at a time; but Miss Kibblewhite, who had been shut up with a friend in the back parlor before, heard him and followed. She gave Dorothea

a glance of reproof, but Dorothea, who in her heart loved a bit of mischief, said out loud :

"It is not my fault, indeed, aunt," and Robert, who suspected what it meant, blushed guiltily, but tried to seem unconscious.

Miss Kibblewhite had too many duties demanding her presence elsewhere to permit her to mount guard over the young folks then, and she was obliged to leave them to their innocent talk and laughter and nut-cracking and genuine enjoyment. They were very happy, none the less happy, perhaps, for the secret little feeling amongst them of being like a set of children out of bounds and fearing to be caught.

"Do you know," said Lola, with a wilful toss of her mane, "I like this better than dignity;" at which every body laughed assent. That little hour of irregular enjoyment was better than a year of afternoons of dignity. Robert did not stay very long, however; and when nothing of the second measure of nuts remained but empty shells, he took up the pretty basket he had brought them in, filled it with Dorothea's silks and worsteds, hung it on her frame, and went away.

"You will come back to tea?" Dorothea cried after him.

"Oh, yes, certainly," replied he; and I dare say Lilian would have liked to be asked to tea too, but such was not her fate; at four o'clock Mistress Hilton and Sempronius reappeared and conveyed their young charges back to "dignity" and the Minster Hill.

### III.

Robert Hawthorne did not become less constant in his visits to Peter Carlton, although, now that Lilian was come back, the organist could not complain of being all day long alone. Lilian generally appeared at the Minster prayers of an afternoon, and afterward went home with him to make his solitary tea. Lady Leigh had granted her this indulgence at the instance of her sister, and both father and daughter highly appreciated it. And about three times a week, as Lilian sat in the low, old-fashioned window-seat with some task of household needlework, too delicate for Tibbie's bad sight and clumsy fingers, she used to see Robert Hawthorne's fine tall figure coming down the Minster Hill, and through the gate into

the churchyard ; when he had got thus far, her eyes always reverted to her sewing and her fingers plied the needle diligently, but for all that seeming industry she could listen to the even beat of his footstep coming across to the house, and could tell the exact moment when he would knock at the door and Tibbie would let him in. It was not often that he passed by the house and out at the other gate, but sometimes he did, and then Lilian would look up at the sky and down at the graves and abroad at the trees, and feel rather as if she were disappointed—rather as if she had missed something.

And Robert, as soon as he had passed through the churchyard gate, could always see the outlines of Lilian's head bent over her work ; and he watched it until he imagined himself within range of her eyes should she by any chance raise it and look out of the window, a little compartment of which she always kept open. When he entered the room, they acknowledged each other with a grave bow, but for some time the words they exchanged were very few indeed. At first, when he came after her return, she would only stay a few minutes, then fold up her work and go away, saying that, since her father had company, he could spare her earlier to Lady Leigh, who sometimes grudged her coming at all ; but it was only a little shyness of Robert that prompted the movement, for by-and-by, when she knew him better, she would stay out her full time—until seven o'clock—and occasionally even earn herself a reproof by lingering longer.

These summer evenings at the organist's house were very pleasant. It was a rather dark, low-ceiled room, but it was spacious and full of odds and ends of antique furniture quite in harmony with it, and Lilian kept it cheerful all the season through with posies of flowers, not to mention the brightness of her own presence. None of those who were used to it ever discovered that it was wanting in any thing.

There is a romance, an unreality, about the dawn of boy and girl love which is very touching. Robert used to watch Lilian in the spirit of the meekest of devotees ; her beauty was to his vision something angelical, so pure and maidenly and yet so bright—bright as the freshness of lilies dew-full amongst their leaves when the sun is scarcely an hour out of the east. Yet Lilian's tongue was sometimes petulant, and her smile was often mischievous when he treated her with a reverence such as no one else ever thought of accord-

ing to her girlish simplicity; and now and then she would answer him with a vivacity that was not angelical at all.

Lilian little thought how far off Robert Hawthorne seemed to see her. Her fine breeding, which showed itself in the clear, soft intonation of her voice, in all her quiet gentle movements, in every gesture and turn of her supple, facile figure, so different to the buxom homely charms of Dorothea Sancton, was like a cloud enshrouding a divinity. Lilian was not quite insensible to Robert's modest admiration, and most likely it pleased her, though she was shy and gave him no conscious encouragement. Nevertheless, when one heart begins to plead with another, ever so silently, ever so reverently, it will be alive to the faintest response, and, without knowing it, Lilian gave Robert many a little token such as boy-lovers treasure up like misers' gold. I think the first symptom which he accepted as wholly favorable was the nuts at St. Wilfred's fair—the nuts which Lilian would not have, and then ate up from his hand and liked. It was a girlish, homely taste, and it dissipated some of the clouds from about her idea. Thenceforward it pleased him to watch how this beautiful young creature, who seemed made for holiday times and places, gradually developed domestic qualities which belong to women rather than to angels. She had a pleasant alacrity, a sunny cheerfulness, and a quiet precision, such as are the soul of household peace, and while she was in it her father's dull old house was happier than a palace.

Dorothea Sancton used sometimes to rally her about turning into so serviceable a little person, and to declare that she had stolen a leaf out of her book; but Dorothea, nevertheless, regarded her as a mere child and had no suspicion of the silent budding of any thoughts inconsistent with samplers, embroidered shepherds, and poonah-painting; and Lilian, not being given to self-examination, never sought a morbid refreshment in confessing any tender little feelings that began to stir in her heart at this time.

They used to have a good deal of music during these meetings, for Robert was passionately fond of it, and Peter was never backward to gratify a real enthusiast. He would go to his instrument and leave Robert sitting by the table with a volume that he rarely opened and never read, while Lilian plied her needle by the window. And, as Peter played, it was not strange that now and then the young peo-

ple's eyes met as if they would have exclaimed, "How beautiful!" For Peter was a musical genius though he was poor, obscure, and unfriended. Every phrase of the great composers whose works he had studied, he interpreted with a justness, a delicate truth, a power unrivaled amongst the most distinguished organists of the day. It was no unusual thing for strangers going in to Walton Minster during service time, to carry away an impression that they had heard the anthem better given there than they had ever heard it given in any other choir in the kingdom.

Lilian had a very pretty little voice, and could sing sweetly and purely, but it was the one thing that Robert never wished her to do. Dorothea had the same feeling, though neither could have given a reasonable explanation for it; but one evening a remark of Peter's gave them a clue to the mystery. She had been singing song after song, rather to herself than to them, for she was sitting apart in the window while they were turning over huge dusty yellow piles of music, in search of some particular piece that Peter had mislaid, when he said, rather querulously,

"Oh, Lily, don't, don't sing any longer—your voice is so like your poor mother's, I cannot bear it."

Dorothea had the tears in her eyes.

"One might think it was Lucy singing here again," said she, softly.

"I had forgotten you all," said Lilian, with an absent air; and then, brightening up into a smile, she threw by her work, and joined in the search for the lost music.

"You sounded as if you were singing up in the clouds," Robert remarked to her, aside.

"Sometimes I think I am two people—one here, and one I don't know where," was her laughing reply.

Peter glanced at her uneasily, but at the sight of the lilies and roses of her face, with the mirthful sunshine over them, his countenance cleared.

"Don't be mystical, Lily," said he, "that would be too hard upon us folks of plain understandings;" and coming across the piece he wanted, he drew it out and went to his organ.

To some people small pleasures are very precious things; indeed, I think those men and women lead the happiest lives who take the good and evil just as they come, without any long looking forward to joys they may never grasp, or to

storms that may blow over and never burst. Without any philosophical intentions, Robert Hawthorne and Lilian Carlton were living their early lives thus, and if a little dream-gilding wove itself over the future of either, its far away brightness did not deaden the calm daily sunshine of the present, for they were content to follow where God and nature might lead them, step by step.

#### IV.

One afternoon when Robert Hawthorne was in the town upon business of the firm, he saw a carriage drive down the Minster hill full of ladies, and with three gentlemen in attendance on horseback. They passed him rapidly, but he recognized Sir Philip Nugent, and in a slim young figure who rode beside him he was sure he saw his brother Cyrus. In the carriage were Lady Nugent, Lady Leigh, Lilian, and little Lola; the whole party took the turn from the market-place, toward the Hadley road, and were out of sight in a few minutes. Robert's face had flushed momentarily, and he walked on a little way, without being quite sure of whither he was going, but, soon recovering from his confusion, he retraced his steps, and went across the Minster yard to Peter Carlton's. Peter was just coming out on his way to the service, but he stopped to answer Robert's questions, and told him that Lilian had been in about an hour before, to bid him a hurried good-bye, previously to setting out with her patroness for Hadley Royal. Sir Philip Nugent had come down into the country rather unexpectedly, and was filling his house with company.

That brief glimpse of his brother had strangely disturbed Robert's mind; it was almost a sickening disappointment to find that Cyrus, who was in his thoughts every hour of the day, could pass him and not know him. Nevertheless, putting himself aside with that half-ashamed feeling that attends a pain of this sort, he went about what he had to do with all his usual system, and that accomplished, he turned his steps toward Maiden Lane, with a feeling of depression and anxiety such as was almost a stranger to his temper.

Mrs. Deborah Eliotson was presiding over the tea-tray, which had just been brought in, and his uncle Joshua was looking through the columns of the *Walton Courant* in

search of news, when he entered. The old man looked up at him, and said kindly—

“You don’t look well this sultry weather, Robert; but I think we have got here what will set you up. Mrs. Eliotson, where is that card?”

Robert’s face cleared instantaneously.

“It *was* upon the table. Betsy must have removed it when she brought in the things,” said the housekeeper, pretending to peep about for it. “Look if she has put it upon the chimney-piece or in my work-basket.”

“Your brother has been here and he left it,” added Mr. Joshua, to stave off the impatience that had flashed into Robert’s eyes.

The card was not found in either of the places indicated by the housekeeper, and from her expression of stealthy glee, the most probable supposition was that she had either destroyed or hidden it where it would not readily be discovered; for she had recently developed a magpieish tendency to appropriate and conceal trifling matters, which she exercised on Robert’s property more than any one else’s; though it was not easy for her to keep her hands off any thing that she saw lying about in a casual manner. Robert saw at once that search and inquiry would be equally vain, so after Betsy had been summoned and had denied all knowledge of the card, he resigned himself to its loss. His uncle made another effort.

“Feel in your pocket, Mrs. Eliotson; if, by any chance, you may have put it there,” he suggested, mildly.

“You know I never put any thing in my pocket, sir,” replied she, with a tartness which convinced Robert that his brother’s card was lurking in the depths of that treacherous receptacle that very moment.

“Cyrus was vastly disappointed not to see you, and I think he wrote on the card when he should come into the town again. I wish I had observed it,” said Mr. Joshua.

Robert commenced his tea in patience; he had resolved that when Pussy fell asleep after tea he would pick her guilty pocket of his own property, nefarious as such a transaction might appear under other circumstances.

“I had the honor of speaking to Mr. Cyrus,” by-and-by said the housekeeper, blandly; “and he seemed to me to have grown into a very fine and distinguished-looking young gentleman indeed; only rather too haughty for his place,



which is a pity, for we are told that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall, and none of us would like to see him so humbled."

Neither Robert nor his uncle made any response to this pious observation, which apparently chafed the deliverer, for she became rather impetuous in her way of handling the crockery, and, as a climax, upset a cup of tea, which she was about to hand to Robert; in ostentatious haste she wafted out her handkerchief to stay the flood until Betsy could arrive, and, in so doing, jerked Cyrus's card from her pocket upon the carpet. With boyish vivacity, Robert was down upon it in an instant, and only just in time, for if Pussy's movements were stealthy, on occasions also they were swift. Her hand came in contact with his upon the floor, and Robert raised his face red and laughing and triumphant, for though he had received a slight scratch, he had secured the card. For some minutes after the scurry the housekeeper appeared bewildered and vacant, but she soon recovered, and went on exactly as if nothing had happened.

"So sorry you were not in, dear Robin," the card said, "for I cannot come into Walton again till Sunday. We are at Hadley for a month and must meet often——" There was an attempt at something more which had been given up, because, as Mrs. Eliotson explained, Cyrus's horse was fidgety and would not stand to let him write further, so he threw her the card and rode off.

"He will come on Sunday—is that a leisure day amongst great folks as well as small?" said Mr. Joshua Hawthorne.

Robert did not much care what it was so long as his brother came to see him, and all the rest of the week he lived in a state of the happiest anticipation. But on Sunday, instead of Cyrus in person, there came only a messenger with a letter—a most disappointing substitute.

Cyrus did not mean to be unkind: he did not mean to slight Robert or to be selfish, but, the fact was, this meeting did not seem so great an event to him as to his brother, and he betrayed it. He said in his letter that there was company at Hadley which he did not like to lose, and he would come on the following day. Robert wondered what company in the world would have tempted him to forego the sight of Cyrus even for an hour! Mrs. Eliotson remarked with a too visible satisfaction that she feared Cyrus had grown rather too fine for such humble folk as they were in

Maiden Lane, but Robert would not hearken to that, he was sure he would come on the Monday.

But on the Monday something else intervened, and again and again, until Robert's heart ached with disappointment. When he appeared, at last, it was with warm affection and overflowing excuses; but Cyrus's brother was never the one to reproach him, and he did not reproach him now. Cyrus never perceived that he had been hurt, and, fancying that "dear old Robin" would bear any thing, he neglected him more than was quite kind or brotherly.

We must accept in his excuse the plea Robert accepted—there was *somebody* at Hadley Royal whom he could not bear to leave. Robert could sympathize with him in some degree. The evenings at Peter Carlton's seemed very strange, and long, and dull, since Lilian went away.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

## YOUNG LOVE'S DREAM.

"Phillis is my only joy;  
 Faithless as the wind or seas;  
 Sometimes coming, sometimes coy,  
 Yet she never fails to please.  
 If with a frown, I am cast down,  
 Phillis smiling and beguiling,  
 Makes me happier than before.

"Though, alas! too late I find,  
 Nothing can her fancy fix;  
 Yet the moment she is kind,  
 I forgive her all her tricks;  
 Which though I see, I can't get free;  
 She deceiving, I believing,  
 What need lovers wish for more?"  
 SIR CHARLES SEDLEY.

## I.

THE rich exuberance of August blushed over the corn which was falling beneath the sickle of the reaper in a thousand fields: already the full fruit acknowledged by a warm glow upon its greeny gloss the kiss of the ripening sun; the garden-plots blazed with the rich reds, and purples, and oranges of the mature age of the year; the woods were darkly draped in their heavy verdurous robes of sombre green. The white-bearded barley waved to its fall; the ripened grasses, dusk brown amongst the hundred-hued wild-flowers on wold, in glen, by wood-walk, by shady hedge-row, trembled in the faint air; the little brooks ran slow and almost dry, where the purple bloom of the heather was out upon the moors; and the great bounteous sea lay under the glowing silence of the sky, like an ample mirror, reflecting its cloudless glory of blueness. The meadows, greenly springing under the sweet night rains after the hay was ingathered, showed each its family of sleek and dappled kine with the lord of the herd browsing peacefully in their midst; beneath the broad shade of elm or ash, or in shallow ponds,

they stood in groups, sheltering from the noontide, and lazily ruminating. Upon the broad wolds were the great flocks of white sheep, scattered like snowflakes to the distant eye, and from them came the low tinkle of the bell worn by the chief of the flock, chiming harmoniously with the soft summer song of birds, and the gentle rustle of the happy sounding leaves. The east terrace under the ivy-clad walls of Hadley Royal lay all in deep shadow with the rich valley of the Gled stretching into far away sunshiny miles below it.

A large party of Sir Philip Nugent's guests had turned out there to breathe the scented warmth of the August afternoon. Seated on a garden chair, close by the grand entrance, were Lady Nugent and Lady Leigh; Mistress Alice Johnes had deposited her bulky insignificance upon one of the lowest steps near at hand, and was drowsily purring in her idleness, like a cat *désœuvrée*. Lilian Carlton was down on her knees teaching a frolicsome spaniel puppy how to beg for almond biscuit, which she had brought out from luncheon, and little Lola was twisting up a wreath of gaudy flowers, with which she presently crowned herself.

At a short distance from these was a second scattered group, consisting of Sir Philip Nugent, his son Cyrus, Mr. Nugent of the Leasowes, and four ladies: three young, and one elderly—mother and daughters, in fact—Lady Eleanor Lowther and her three Graces—Sophia, Caroline, and Phyllis. Lady Eleanor Lowther had been a noted beauty in her day, and her celebrity was reflected on her girls: they all had the reputation of beauties; but only Phyllis, the youngest, deserved it; the other two were spare in form, and insipid in face; but she was a fair, laughing, blushing, dimpled Hebe, fascinating and captivating exceedingly. It was to her that Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent was devoting himself—rather more earnestly than her playfulness seemed to appreciate. Her sisters were sitting silent and dignified, giving weary ear to the prosiness of the widowed Nugent of the Leasowes, and her mother, with an eye on each one of them, was holding Sir Philip Nugent in conversation. She was eminently pastoral in her remarks, which, for a woman whose life had been passed in a whirl of gaiety, and whom the country bored to extinction, seemed almost inexplicable.

"You have a prospect from this terrace, as gloriously beautiful as it is expansive, Sir Philip," said she, with a patronizing wave of her fair hand toward the valley. "There

is a richness, a variety, an affluence, in it that charms me."

Sir Philip Nugent's glance followed the sweep of Lady Lowther's hand, and paused, at last, upon the laughing face of Phyllis. When Phyllis laughed, she had a pretty way of throwing back her head, a gesture which displayed the smooth whiteness and exquisite setting on of her neck; then she opened her mouth, and disclosed two tiny even rows of pearls, shining in an arch of vivid coral, and the laugh rang out soft and clear as a peal of bells over her pouting lips. Sir Philip's glance, pausing on this bright vision, lingered there half absently. Lady Eleanor continued to rhapsodize, and forgave him that he did not listen. She was a woman of the world, worldly—also, she was the mother of three daughters to marry.

"Hadley Royal," said she, with an unctuous mouthing of the wealth-suggesting word, "Hadley Royal is the most complete place of its kind in the kingdom. I have always thought so, and not its least charm is that, look round you from what point you will, the eye rests only on your own possessions. But pardon me, Sir Philip, an old woman's privilege—do you owe nothing to these broad acres that enrich you? Has this stately pile, the birth-place and mausoleum of twenty generations of your race, no claim upon you?"

Sir Philip removed his gaze from fair Phyllis Lowther to his son. He was far fonder of Cyrus, far prouder of him, than of all his buried ancestors. The young man had a very noble visage—an air frank, kindly, and courageous; he looked as if he were accustomed to find favor and indulgence, and to expect it—pity that he was only a natural son!

"I am glad that my William married early," Lady Eleanor went on. "Men and women of our rank owe a duty to the times to come. 'Twas but yesterday that Lady Leigh and I were regretting how this magnificent place must find its heir in your cousin of the Leasowes. Those Bedinfield Nugents are not of the true blood, curmudgeons that they are."

Sir Philip smiled hardly.

"You are severe on my cousin," replied he; "Tom learnt the value of money from his mother, who was the most penurious heiress in our county. He would have been poor but for the Bedinfield consols."

"Then I suppose his ostentatious charity is the Nugent liberality striving with the Bedinfield parsimoniousness. But how can you reconcile it to your conscience to let Hadley Royal pass into such hands?"

"Your ladyship forgets that Tom Nugent is several years older than I am, and that I may outlive him."

"But he has sons."

Sir Philip's dark face flushed as he thought, "I also have sons." The next moment he uttered it:

"I also have sons, Lady Eleanor."

"I know it, Sir Philip Nugent. It is justly done to acknowledge them. I wish the law and the world would acknowledge them too. Cyrus is a son to be proud of; but you know what I mean—you have no heir except Tom Nugent and his boys."

Mr. Nugent of the Leasowes, catching the echo of his own name, turned his head suspiciously, and bent a listening ear that way, which Sir Philip and Lady Lowther detecting, their conversation changed immediately to a less personal theme, and a few minutes after the depreciated gentleman joined them himself, and began to speak of the prospects of the game that season.

For some time back, while wearing so bland a countenance to Sir Philip, Lady Eleanor had been furtively observing her daughter Phyllis with momentarily increasing displeasure, and Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent with secret fear, and she now summoned the damsel to receive a gentle maternal lecture. She was a judicious woman; she never stormed, or scolded, or commanded, yet ultimately she obtained her will over her children and over most other people besides. She had never been baffled but once, and that was in the case of her eldest daughter, Julia, who made a runaway lovematch in spite of her. Julia was widowed now; she was very poor, and she had four children to feed and educate, but she was unforgiven still. Never more would she know the warmth of the maternal heart or hearth, and never would her bones be permitted to come to the sepulchre of her fathers. When her sisters spoke of her it was in secret, and as of one banned beyond all hope of pardon. The traditions of the house concerning this outcast daughter were touching and pathetic enough; she had been her mother's favorite and very beautiful. Phyllis was growing like her, as like her in willfulness of temper as she was like her in the face. Lady Elea-

nor was in the habit of saying that all her hopes centred in Phyllis now, and if Phyllis disappointed her she thought her heart would break. Tough, worldly old heart! All your breaking would be a mere figure of speech, signifying mortified pride and defeated ambition.

As Phyllis approached, Lady Eleanor imprisoned her two rebellious hands which struggled to escape, and said, in a dulcet voice, which yet betrayed the under-current of rebuke—

“My precious, where is your hat? You will be tanned and freckled like a wild little gipsy! Look at Lilian Carlton in her modest hood; she does as she is bid, and takes care of herself.”

“But I am not Lilian Carlton,” pouted Phyllis, with a fling of her pretty head.

“I am afraid my petulant darling is not half so good. Sir Philip, I appeal to you: must my Phyllis spoil her pretty face before the town has seen her?”

Sir Philip gallantly replied that it could not be spoilt—it was, like her mother's beauty, proof against all accidents.

Cyrus had followed Phyllis when she was summoned by her mother, and, the ineffectual lecture being closed in this complimentary manner, he suggested that the afternoon was now become cool enough for a row upon the lake. Lady Lowther would have liked to negative the proposal and to frown the young man away if she had dared, but it was well known that all who would stand high with Sir Philip Nugent must accord to his natural son exactly the same measure of courtesy as they would have accorded to his heir had he possessed one of his own blood. She was, however, relieved to see that Sir Philip meant to be of the party, so she permitted Phyllis to leave her, with a glance of warning which the young beauty knew how to interpret, but which she was far too careless to heed.

Mr. Nugent of the Leasowes excused himself to Sophia and Caroline on the plea of having letters to write, which meant taking a nap in his dressing-room until it was time to embellish himself for dinner. Though upward of sixty years of age, and twenty years a widower, he sacrificed many half-hours daily to the personal graces; he liked it to be supposed that he intended to marry again, because it gained him more consideration in society, but it was only a Jesuitical pretence which he would have been very reluctant to realize. The

first Mrs. Nugent's temper had been far too breezy for the matrimonial haven, and he was scarcely likely, unless in the easiness of senility, to commit his sails to it again. As he retired toward the house Lilian Carlton, sent by Lady Leigh, came swiftly after the party bound for the water; her patroness had commanded her to go and enjoy herself with the other young people, and Lilian, generally obedient at this date, went accordingly. Lola stayed behind with her spaniel and her flowers.

## II.

Sir Philip Nugent and his son walked at some distance in advance of the rest of the party with Phyllis Lowther between them. Phyllis was very young, and had her little head full of romantic, selfish, impossible expectancies; but the natural woman was already beginning to develop itself in her character. Most societies can show one or two spoilt beauties whose chief triumph it is to attract all the men away from the rest of the sex and pin them to their own skirts: Phyllis Lowther was one of these beauties in the bud. Let it be at once admitted that the fair idols fascinate because they are fascinating. Excellent, clever, ugly, hard women may expend themselves in caprices and *minauderies*, and remain wall-flowers to their lives' end, lacking the subtle power which the others possess as a gift of nature. Let neglected dames and damsels, if they will, apply to their ex-coriated vanity the soothing unction that they are stronger-minded and more virtuous than their adulated sisters, but I incline to leave the matter an open question until further evidence is produced. Bad complexions and holy lives are not necessarily synonymous, neither does Satan always infest polite society in the guise of an angel. Of Phyllis Lowther individually it may be said that she had quick youthful impulses, which are commonly more or less generous, a florid imagination, traditional pride, latent ambition, and a worldly education combined with more than the average amount of ability in the crude state. Her sisters, ordinary, honest, sincere, palely interesting young women of two and three seasons respectively, were rather jealous of Mistress Phyllis, who loved few amusements better than flourishing her early conquests in their meek faces with a provoking air of innocence;



but no one could long be angry with her, for all her naughtiness arose out of mischief rather than malice.

The little spring, graceful and winning, with which she carried herself toward Sir Philip and Cyrus, showed that she was pleased with their assiduities, and that her art was still too imperfect to conceal it. Sophia and Caroline, following behind observant, commented to each other on her childish vanity and said, they thought it spoilt her: 'tis lucky that men are more tolerant of womanish weaknesses than women are themselves! Sir Philip and his son, who had both a fair share of masculine vanity, were charmed with the young beauty's impulsive enjoyment of their society; the mutual flattery set them on excellent terms with themselves and each other.

Lilian Carlton had joined the two elder sisters, who received her with a stately cordiality; they liked her, but, of course, she was not one of them; she was only a *protégée* of that eccentrically charitable Lady Leigh, and be very sure the highborn and highbred young ladies let Lilian see that they were quite sensible of the great social gulf between themselves and her. Down the broad terrace steps they all descended to the luxuriant flower-garden; no narrow contracted space, but a sloping expanse where grand forest trees rose upon the lawns, and scarcely reached with lengthening evening shadows the beds of rainbow hues scattered over it far and wide. Another flight of steps brought them to a closely shaven alley, belted with firs, which made a steep descent to the boat-house and the lake. In a few minutes they were all seated in the boat, and, Sir Philip taking one oar and Cyrus the other, they glided swiftly out into the open water beyond reach of the overhanging trees which at that part crowded its banks.

Lady Eleanor Lowther did not expatiate on the glories of Hadley Royal without warrant, for it was indeed one of those sumptuous and perfectly kept places which attest, through the length and breadth of England, the wealth, the taste, and the family tenacity of her gentlemen. It was not the work of one generation, but of many. The Nugents had held Hadley Royal in an unbroken line ever since it fell to the share of their fortunate ancestor, when the spoils of the church were divided by King Henry the Eighth. The mansion had been built by the first of them, and each of its successive inheritors had added something to its em-

bellishment. Vanburgh had enlarged and restored it, and but for the universally spreading ivy it might have presented several grand incongruities; but as it now was it towered in sombre magnificence and completeness over a park which contained within its fence not only several hundred acres of rich land, kept like a garden, but also the upper and rock-bound part of the valley of the Gled, in whose sweet solitudes lay the beautiful ruins of the Abbey of Eurevaux.

The lake was fed from the rapid little river which flowed through the valley, and as the party in the boat approached its head, they looked straight up it to where the massy gray walls and towers of the Abbey reared themselves in their solemn silence against the afternoon sky. Lilian Carlton had a special favor for ancient religious buildings, perhaps because her early sense of beauty had been fed amongst the Gothic quaintness of Walton Minster, and her fancy had reveled amongst its legend memories when the mind is most impressible.

Imagination may, indeed, well carry any of us back to the monkish glories about which romance and poetry, and, to many, the breath of piety, will always linger. This fair Abbey, even in ruin, was nobler, grander, statelier, than the noblest, grandest, stateliest edifice that men think it worth while to raise in these days. And the building of the Abbey was the work of men's hearts as well as of their hands—a memorial to all time of what men in earnest will do for the honor of God and their faith.

Centuries ago, in the depth of a most rigorous winter, a little band of determined monks invaded the then uncultivated solitudes of Gleddale. At first, the rocks gave them an icy protection; but after awhile, they thatched themselves an enclosure under a spreading elm. The elm is gone, but certain traditional yew-trees, which are also said to have afforded shelter to these few enthusiastic men, remain to this day. They stand on a green knoll above the hill; one is a dry, dead trunk, but three still wear their dark green crowns, though their boles are mere grotesque and hoary skeletons. The rest have gone down before the crumbling touch of time and tempest, but they live yet in tradition under the name of the Seven Sisters.

There was a great soul animating this band of homeless men, camped out under the winter trees, when the little Gled was ice-bound, and the woods were blocked with

drifts of snow. They were men of pith and courage, forcible contrasts to the popular idea of the jolly friar of later and more luxurious days; forcible contrasts to the anointed king who stole and sold their inheritance in the name of God. After they had undergone their term of hard probation, the day of success came to them at last; but how many lived to see the building finished whose ruins put to shame the feebler architectural conceptions of modern days, story sayeth not. There was a time when the Benedictine community of Eurevaux possessed lands extending for thirty miles northward and westward of the boundaries of St. Wilfred, at Walton, and held estates of sixty thousand acres in a ring fence in Craven. Their church was one of the most beautiful in the kingdom, and nobles and princes purchased for themselves, by rich donations burial-places within its walls.

Sir Philip Nugent and Cyrus fastened the boat to a ring in the landing-place, and the whole party got out to walk to the ruins. The environs were reduced to admirable order—perhaps too trim an order to be in strict keeping with the unroofed walls, broken columns, empty windows, and hollow halls and chapels of the skeleton Abbey. It reminded Cyrus, with its general air of studied neatness, of the washing and dressing of a corpse—beautiful still, and full of a most touching pathos as testifying to the loving care of the living, but in itself soulless, passionless, mute, immovable, gone out from amongst our every-day interests forever and ever!

But there remained still some choice bits of living antique. The mill, half shrouded in trees, was running on as merrily as it ran in old days; the bridge, with its water-worn base, and stones ingrained with moss and lichens and wreathed with ivy, still glassed itself in the little river. At that mill the monks' corn was ground; over that bridge went all the world-weary, travel-weary feet to the hospitium, where the monks entertained strangers. That bridge was the most life-like, most poetical, most suggestive relic of the whole. The trees about it were very old and gray; how many generations ago they were planted none can tell; but it was the same picture as the saintly eyes of monk and pilgrim beheld; green leaves quivering to their shadows in the water; green reeds dipping on the brink; blue sky and white cloud overhead; and the grave outline of the arch

traced on the clear, rippling river. From the stately chapels, the princely halls, the solemn cloisters, the glory was long since departed; but the voice of the stream, the flitting sunshine, the stirring of the trees, the wind down the valley, were the same, ever the same. Man's pride and man's labor pass away, but God and Nature endure, and these connect us with the great hearts that went to dust at Eure-vaulx centuries ago, more than all the arches and columns they ever reared.

Upon this bridge the party stopped to rest, Sir Philip Nugent and Cyrus being still in close attendance upon Phyllis. Leaning against the gray parapet, with her little feet indolently crossed the one over the other, prattling and laughing in her thoughtless way, and blushing as brightly as the roses in the mill garden, she was a picture of maidenhood, very fair, very lovely to behold. She had taken Cyrus's inflammable imagination captive at the first glance, and though Sir Philip might be rather cynical and unbelieving as to the extreme innocence of any thing brought up by that famous old intriguer, Lady Eleanor Lowther, he admired her as a sweet, merry girl, more than he had admired any of her sex for more than a score of years. Had the petted beauty known her power and how to use it, now might have been begun a romance, whose complications would have been infinitely amusing to her leisure; but whatever future years might make of her, she was no coquette when Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent, in the heyday of his youth, became enamored of her fair face. Child-fashion, she would always call him by his Christian name; and, pausing now suddenly in the middle of a trilling laugh, she became, all at once, meditatively grave, and said, with a pretty air of mystery, half confidential and half puzzled, as if she were a sybil announcing an oracle, hard even beyond her own interpretation—

"Cyrus, shall I tell you what I have been thinking of ever since we came in sight of the Abbey?"

Of course Cyrus was urgent to know and confess it.

"I have been thinking that if you had lived in the old times you would have been a monk."

The young man laughed, and protested that his present views were quite opposed to the celibate life.

"Nevertheless, you would have become a monk," she repeated, with a peremptory nod of her head; "I say it."

"Explain," interposed Sir Philip; "I see no signs of the

ascetic in Cyrus. I cannot picture him as a holy penitent at all."

"What made men monks formerly?"

"A religious vocation in some cases—in most, I hope, for it was a dreary life."

"But Cyrus would not have had a religious vocation."

"Then there were great sinners who hid themselves, to do penance for their misdeeds."

"Cyrus might have been a great sinner, but I do not think he is weak enough to maunder into repentance," replied Phyllis, with a pretty audacious laugh at her sister's shocked and remonstrating glances. "You Nugents are not famed for your humility either before God or man."

"Very true—too true. But still you have not told us why Cyrus would have become a monk, had he lived in monkish times."

Phyllis glanced up in the young man's face with an inquiring expression, and then, pointing to the lane winding under the elms, which conducted from the mill to the highway out of Glededale, she said—

"I can fancy him standing here on the bridge, looking wistfully along that old, old road that leads back into the world; cowed and frocked, but for all that, what Mr. Miles in his sermons calls the 'natural man,' unchanged; his heart full of burning ambitions, fretful desires, and miserable disappointments. I can fancy him stung and tortured almost to madness by the cruel mocking and idle spites of the world, flying to these solitudes in search of peace, and finding only a prison and despair. You look grave, Sir Philip——"

"I am glad my son was not born in monkish times," replied he, with a sharp accent, which betrayed an acute annoyance; "the hardest battle with our life is better than a cowardly retreat from it."

Cyrus was regarding the prophetic damsel with pained astonishment; whether she intended it or not, she had insinuated some dark thoughts into his mind, which neither her pitying pathos nor her sunshiny smiles could dispel. Her words, whether intentionally or not, suggested that she knew his position and its disadvantages thoroughly; that she recognized in him an illegitimate son, who, seeing his inheritance pass from him to an alien, would have no such ready refuge in his shame and rage as the bosom of the church; and that he would flee to it as the stricken deer flees to the covert of

sheltering woods. Lady Eleanor Lowther never left her daughters in ignorance of what they ought to know, and her girls had known ever since they were children that Sir Philip Nugent's son Cyrus was base-born, and therefore, brave, handsome, agreeable, talented, as he might be, he was no match for any of them. But it was indiscreet in Phyllis to betray her knowledge, and it was what her mother would have highly disapproved. Lilian Carlton, who had much of that intuitive delicacy of her sex which teaches how to avoid or to pass lightly over those chronic sores which no medication of time or skill can ever hope to cure, felt deeply indignant; and Phyllis's two sisters, placid and cold-tempered as they were, launched at her rebuking and warning glances. She seemed surprised at the effect she had produced, and asked, with a blushing look all round the circle—

"What is the matter? Have I said any thing I ought not to have said? I am very sorry, I am sure."

I daresay she was; indiscreet tongues are generally prompt penitents.

"If I had turned monk I should have stayed in my cell, and never fronted the open sky again," Cyrus replied, forcing a laugh.

"Never mind my nonsense," cried Phyllis, rallying; "you shall not be a monk; you shall be a St. George and slay dragons."

"Or be slain of them," was his reply.

Sir Philip looked disturbed and made an attempt to change the conversation, but an irksome feeling pervaded the party, and it failed. His proposal that they should walk on to the Abbey was, therefore, gladly acceded to; and as he joined Sophia when they proceeded on the way, Phyllis and Cyrus were left to themselves. Cyrus looked gloomy and kept silence, a state of things which the gay young damsel could not endure; so presently she asked, in that soft seductive way which had beguiled his heart out of his bosom already—

"Cyrus, have I displeased you? you know I did not mean it, if I have."

He looked down at her pretty pathetic eyes and forgave her.

"Do you despise me, Phyllis, since you know all?" he said, his face firing crimson, and his brows and lips twitching convulsively.

"Why should I despise you? You are yourself, are you

not?—and all I have ever known you. Despise you? no—I like you, and always did.” She regarded him quite frankly for a moment, and then her eyes dropped under his ardent gaze, and her heart beat a little faster. What did it mean? Was her mother’s warning coming true? Was she falling in love? Nonsense! why she knew Cyrus like a brother!

“Where are my sisters and Sir Philip? I wish they would come on,” she said, stopping uneasily and looking back. No one was in sight, they had turned a different way.

“We do not want them; they will overtake us soon,” Cyrus answered, and they passed together through an archway into a green square which had formerly been the Abbot’s garden.

### III.

Phyllis went with an air of reluctance and timidity—an air of doing what she knew to be wrong; yet still she went. She had a half-forbidden pleasure in being with Cyrus which her mischievous imagination invested with a peculiar delight. As for any harm that might ensue, that was quite beyond her prevision; women after her kind are never remarkable for discretion.

The Abbot’s garden was not a garden now, but merely a grassy court with tier above tier of eyeless window-frames looking down blankly on its desolateness. There was no sunshine in it either, but just within the archway some fantastic hand had planted and tended carefully two rose-trees which were now covered with the flush of bloom. The moment Phyllis saw them she fell to gathering a posy of the unopened buds, and as might be anticipated, in her confused hurry, she had not gathered long before she ran a thorn into her palm, and dropped her spoils with a pettish cry of pain. Cyrus said he must extract the thorn; so she held out her pretty hand, and let him take it until the operation—needlessly prolonged—was accomplished. Just as this was done, Sir Philip Nugent’s voice was heard approaching, and Cyrus saw his father pass the archway with Sophia Lowther. Phyllis immediately proposed to rejoin them, but Cyrus, acting on the sudden impulse of the moment, detained her. He wanted to speak to her, he said; would she not listen? That thorn in the rose was answerable for all the mischief.

Phyllis knew what was coming; she glanced shyly aside, blushed, trembled, and made no reply, though she kept moving away from him. Cyrus being desperately in earnest, was naturally agitated, and she was a little frightened too in thinking how angry her mother would be if she knew what was going on. She did not quite understand her own feelings or his either, but when the fruit of the tree of knowledge turns its tempting sunny side toward a woman, when does she forbear to pluck and eat? Phyllis's rosy little mouth was always ready.

So Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent told Phyllis Lowther how dearly he loved her—how his soul flowed out irresistibly toward her—how she was his only hope in the whole wide world—and all this in passionate, incoherent language, which brought bright tears into her eyes, and made her newly-touched heart beat warm and fast. But she was silent when he had done.

"Phyllis, say something," pleaded he, grasping her little hand very hard; for her silence was not the silence of encouragement. She would not tell him he hurt her, but she tried to draw it away.

"Say one word to me, Phyllis," he urged.

She glanced round timidly, as if she would fain escape. There was a certain bitterness in this fair fruit to which she had wilfully set her teeth; she remembered many things in that first moment of tasting it that she would have been far happier forgetting, and Cyrus saw that she remembered them.

"Phyllis, why will you not speak to me?" said he, more impetuously; "have I offended you?"

"Let me go; it is of no use," replied she, with sudden passion. "Oh! let me go!"

"If you love me, Phyllis, who can come between us?"

"Oh! let me go!" she reiterated, sharply. "My mother and William would rather bury me alive in our hideous family mausoleum, than give me to you if you were the son of an emperor!"

"But, Phyllis, do you love me?" Cyrus said, turning very white, as he bent down and looked into her agitated face.

She would not answer him at all, but, turning silently away, she stooped to pick up the scattered roses, and to hide some of the truest tears her bright eyes ever shed. In



the momentary commotion of young feeling, she felt very fond of Cyrus, and pained and pleased at the same time that he was so very fond of her, and he was not blind to his advantage. There never yet was one of Nugent blood who was either a cold woer, or a woer easily cowed by a maiden's tremulous silence. He pleaded, persuaded, urged, begged, prayed, praised, glorified, and enticed her, until Phyllis was quite dazzled and bewildered by his impassioned eloquence; she softened, she relented, she was prepared to be quite reckless and self-sacrificing for his sake, and coming out of her tearful mood, like the sunshine from behind a cloud, she smiled upon him kindly, though she still repeated that it was of *no use*, when he knew how Lady Eleanor disliked him.

"But Cyrus would not lend an ear to this. "Since you love me, Phyllis, I will find a way of overriding all obstacles," said he, confidently; and no doubt he thought at the moment, with his heart full of joy and passion, that he could do it easily. Phyllis brightened more and more. It was very pleasant to be worshipped, and novel too. They were each other's first love, they said. Cyrus soon grew exacting after his fashion. He made Phyllis give him some of the roses and then a long tress of her pale auburn hair to bind them together, and he gave her a crisp round curl of his—which tokens were to be for all eternity. Withered roses and a tress of tarnished golden hair! I am thinking of the time when they came to light again and whose hand held them, and of all that came and went between Then and Now!

The young lovers had moved on from the Abbot's garden into the Lady Chapel, and were standing upon the stone that covered a grave when they exchanged locks of hair. Phyllis pointing down at it, laughed.

"United until death," was the interpretation Cyrus chose to put upon the omen; and then they wandered away into the cloisters, and to and fro, and backward and forward, quite forgetful of the time and of every thing but themselves, until Caroline's voice was heard impatiently calling, "Phyllis, Phyllis, where are you hiding?"

"Not hiding at all, here we are," responded Cyrus, and the pair issued out upon her suddenly from one of the chapels.

"It is time to set off home, Sir Philip thinks it is going to rain. We must make haste down to the boat."

They all started quickly over the bridge toward the lake.

As they were going Caroline asked, "Have either of you two been up into the Hall of Audience this afternoon?"

Phyllis colored confusedly, glanced at her sister's unrevealing countenance, and said, "No."

"I have," replied Caroline; "it looks down upon the Abbot's garden."

Of course Phyllis knew that all chance of concealment was over, and though her heart quaked inwardly at the anticipation of her mother's wrath, she chose to put on a reckless and defiant air.

Cyrus was more politic; he knew they might need an ally. "Will you stand our friend with Lady Eleanor?" asked he, gravely.

Caroline was a good-natured young woman, but she had, in common with the rest of the Lowthers, a great deal of what is called 'proper pride.' "You should have addressed yourself to my mother first," replied she. "You have both been foolish."

"Carry, darling, you will not tell mamma just yet?" pleaded Phyllis, cooling down rapidly from her temporary exaltation.

"I cannot promise any thing, but I will certainly leave you the chance of telling her yourselves; tell her to-night."

"I never dare;" and Phyllis looked as if she were on the verge of tears. She answered Cyrus quite pettishly when he tried to cheer and encourage her. "If you had to face mamma in one of her white rages, you would not talk about 'never-minding' and 'all coming right in the end,'" said she; "just recollect how she used Julia."

Cyrus was obliged to swallow his mortification as well as he could; this last suggestion was not pleasant. Phyllis was not exactly the sort of woman one expects to become a martyr to any thing in cool blood—not even to her love. It required a rather strong exercise of his faith to imagine her supporting, for his sake, even a tithe of the persecutions which her sister Julia had borne; but he pressed her hand gently and whispered, "You will be firm, love, will you not?" and she promised that she would—and meant it.

They were hastening down to the boat as quickly as they could, when a few big drops began to fall, hissing on the summer dust, and a violent thunder crash shook the air. As it died away Sir Philip Nugent was seen hurrying up the road to meet them.

"Turn back! turn back!" shouted he. "Run for the shelter of the Abbey before the storm bursts!"

Phyllis was rather pleased by the fun of the race, as they all scampered back to the ruins, with the shower driving after and overtaking them; her merry laugh accompanied them all the way. She ran holding Cyrus's hand, and when they reached one of the deep arches in the wall, he began with the most solicitous care, to wrap her up and shield her against the wet. Sir Philip lent his aid also in the same pleasant task, while the other three young women were left to their own devices to screen themselves as they could. Phyllis was now in wild excited spirits, and the run had put her out of breath, which was perhaps the reason she began by and by to shiver, tremble, and hide her face when the spears of lightning flashed across the clouds—for she was not generally afraid; or her pretty tremor *might* have been one of those innocent little wiles to charm and interest which were as natural to her as any of her other graces.

Sir Philip and Cyrus stood by her protectingly, encouraging her as if she were a timid child, until her sister Sophia's patience fairly broke down at the sight of their lavish assiduities, and she said, with a very perceptible shade of acrimony in her tone:

"Sir Philip Nugent, do you recollect the fearful storm we had last September, when my brother William's groom was killed, while exercising his horses on Morker Common? Phyllis was not a bit afraid then, for she *would* sit up at an open window of the tower to aggravate mamma."

"And Phyllis is not a bit afraid now—she is only pretending," replied Sir Philip laughing. "She likes to be petted, that is all, and she knows she is affording us a real pleasure."

Phyllis colored, pouted, and exclaimed, in an offended tone,

"Sir Philip, that is very unkind of you; I am not acting stories, and I hate to be petted;" in support of which assertion, and in spite of remonstrance, she walked out of her shelter, and into the long wet grass. Sir Philip and Cyrus entreated her piteously to return, but she would not. "I am going home to mamma," said she, and forward she went.

Cyrus followed, of course, and finding her utterly deaf to all argument and persuasion, he stripped off his coat, and insisted on wrapping her in its folds; and the two young

fools walked three miles through a pelting rain, not unhappily, and stole in home by a side door without a dry thread on their backs.

#### IV.

"In the evening in the long drawing-room, where the modern portraits of the Nugents were, Cyrus and Phyllis chose to devote themselves entirely to each other. Sir Philip could not extract any thing but the most frozen monosyllables from the lips of the affronted beauty, neither would she speak to her sister Sophia. No one was much dejected by this freak of temper, but Cyrus drew his profit therefrom, in the lengthened opportunity it gave him to plead his suit. Caroline had kept her word, and Lady Eleanor was still in ignorance of the mortification that awaited her.

She was now seated, drowsily digestive, in a luxurious chair, through half-closed eyes contemplating a fine portrait of Sir Philip Nugent. On the corresponding panel hung one equally excellent of his son Cyrus, which, in her beatific after-dinner visions she daily deposed to make way for another—a portrait of her Phyllis, as Lady Nugent, Sir Philip's wife.

Lady Leigh and her sister were withdrawn to the fireside, discussing a certain matter in which their interest was most profound. The sisters-in-law were not generally scheming women, but their desire to see Sir Philip married, and an heir born to him, before their own heads were laid in the grave, had led them into a plot at last. They had taken counsel together, and had run through the list of eligible spinsters of their acquaintance, to find for him a suitable match. Youth, beauty, birth, and talent of a high order were found united in the person of Phyllis Lowther: Phyllis Lowther was in all respects worthy to become Lady Nugent of Hadley Royal; the two families had intermarried before—what more correct than that they should intermarry again? And as for disparity of age, Sir Philip was as vigorous, both in mind and body, as he had ever been. This conclusion arrived at, the first step in the plot was to bring the two in contact without letting either suspect the ulterior object of their meeting. Lady Lowther and her three graces

were amongst the first guests invited to stay at Hadley Royal.

Profoundly interested as were the two dowagers in the success of their scheme, every danger that threatened it was instantly perceptible to them, and Phyllis had not been at Hadley four-and-twenty hours before they saw that Cyrus had fallen into captivity to the gay and graceful girl. Nothing was more natural, but, under the circumstances, certainly nothing could have been more aggravating, for it was apparent also that Phyllis, either from vanity, idleness, or reciprocity of feeling, intended to encourage him. In the dangerous propinquity of a country-house, their acquaintance ripened fast to intimacy, and their intimacy soon became confidential. Cyrus let his feelings run loose quite recklessly, and when Phyllis met his advances with blushes and smiles, arch glances and shy alarms, what could he think but that she liked him too? Indeed, we have already seen the natural conclusion of the matter in the Abbot's garden.

Lady Leigh, with whom Cyrus was a great favorite, blamed herself severely for not having foreseen the danger, and prevented it, ere it was too late; she said the young man would have acted much more sensibly and discreetly, had he fallen in love with Lilian Carlton. But when does hot youth act sensibly and discreetly in its choice of a first love? Lady Leigh had all along destined her pet Lilian for Cyrus's wife, so that her disappointment was twofold; but as for his aspiring to Phyllis Lowther, the idea was simply ridiculous. The Lowthers were a very ancient and honorable family, who formed alliances always from motives of duty to their order, combined with a clear personal interest, and if any member of it acted contrary to the established principle, that member was cut off from the parent trunk, as a worthless and disgraceful branch. What Phyllis had told Cyrus of the present heads of the race was strictly true: they would far rather bury her alive in their hideous family mausoleum, than give her in marriage to the illegitimate son, even of an emperor.

The long drawing-room opened into a line of conservatories, and while Lady Leigh and Lady Nugent were discussing how most gently to mitigate the evil that they perceived to be impending, Cyrus and Phyllis meandered through the glass doors unobserved, and made love amongst the moonlit flowers for a delicious half-hour. Caroline and Sophia were

singing a fine duet to Lilian Carlton's accompaniment, and Sir Philip and his cousin of the Leasowes were deep in the consideration of some important county topic, when Lady Eleanor, starting out of the slumber that had overtaken her, asked drowsily, "Where is my Phyllis?"

As nobody undertook to answer her, she raised herself majestically, and, looking round the room, detected the absence of Cyrus also. The door into the conservatory was ajar, and, as the young folks were rather fond of walking in there when the stateliness of elder society bored them, it was immediately suggested to her mind that Phyllis and Cyrus would be there now.

Lady Eleanor wore a rich soft satin dress, that made no rustling when she moved, which was one reason why she was enabled to approach the unwitting lovers, and to see and hear what opened her eyes to very good purpose. If she had been merely flesh and blood, and not an indurated type of maternal ambition, she would have been touched by the sight of the pretty group: the loving attitude in which they stood has been done into marble often.

"Phyllis!" said she, in an indescribably soft, angry voice.

Phyllis started round in a moment, with scared eye and flaming cheek, and mother and daughter stood facing and measuring each other for a quiet minute's space. Lady Eleanor's graceful urbanity returned to her.

"Mr. Cyrus Hawthorne has made a mistake which I trust he will not have the indiscretion to repeat," said she gravely. "Phyllis, you had better come back to your sisters with me." And drawing the tremulous little hand through her arm, she led the young damsel slowly away, allowing her time to recover herself by stopping several times to admire the flowers. No one could have suspected, from the united manner in which they re-entered the drawing-room, that any awkward discovery had just taken place. Lady Eleanor was a pattern to her sex for the avoidance of scenes.

Cyrus presently came in at another door, looking very handsome, bold, and defiant. He had got over the shock of Lady Eleanor's first awful note of warning, and was determined to bear himself as it became a lover to do who is secure of his mistress's favor. He *would* hand Phyllis her tea, he *would* speak to her, he *would* be near to her, though her mother kept her at her elbow all the evening, and Phyllis

herself gave him furtive pleading looks, as much as to say, "*Don't aggravate mamma.*"

Lady Nugent and Lady Leigh, and also Miss Caroline, perceived that the affair had come to a climax; but the two dowagers very discreetly forbore to meddle, perceiving that Lady Eleanor had already taken up the line of action that it was not proper to pursue, and that she was quite adequate to the sole management of the very troublesome affair.

## V.

Lady Eleanor made no fuss. When she and Phyllis were alone in the room which they occupied together, she told her daughter, rather pleasantly than otherwise, that she was a little fool, but she did not scold or lecture her, or aggravate her feelings in any way. She had discerned, in the sudden moment of discovery, that she had not a strong spirit to deal with, as in the case of her eldest child Julia. Phyllis might be willful, but she was timid, and had a reasonable awe of the family lesson which had been given in her sister's person. She might rebel, and fret, and fly into a passion or two, but she would not hold out under a constant pressure such as her mother would exert. Lady Lowther was especially anxious that what had happened should not come to Sir Philip's knowledge, for her maternal vanity had already detected flattering symptoms in his attentions to Phyllis, and rivalry between father and son would be shocking to all the modern social proprieties.

Cyrus also kept his own counsel, which seconded her views, but forthwith there began between them a stealthy system of check and counter-check, of mine and counter-mine, which made the object of all this intrigue truly miserable. Phyllis's life became a burden to her, for there was never a young maiden formed yet, who was less inclined to appreciate the luxuries of family persecution than herself. Her temper suffered from it extremely, and Cyrus suffered from that.

Then Lady Eleanor treated him to a lofty impertinent compassion, which made his blood boil in his veins like lava. In Sir Philip Nugent's absence she would tell plaintive histories of men similarly circumstanced to himself, which caused him to writhe with shame and impotent rage, and which made

Lady Leigh long to circumvent her by taking his part. And, worst of all, Phyllis was in tears whenever he spoke to her, and declared herself more wretched than she could express; not that the tears or the wretchedness were of any long continuance; she could not keep them up, and was as variable as an April day, crying one moment, laughing the next.

Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent's star was not in the ascendant when Mistress Phyllis Lowther crossed his path. It is not favorable to a young man's growth in goodness when his love, instead of lifting him to heaven, humiliates him in the dust, and an inborn knowledge of abasement keeps him there, his eyes earthward, his heart bursting, while the great and glorious vision passes by. He had no sooner cast his thoughts on Phyllis, than suddenly, as by the rending away of a veil, his own identity confronted him, and bade him give up a hope so insane as that she could ever be his; and he might have turned and fled in time, had not the goddess smiled on him encouragingly, bewildered beyond redemption what little of reason remained with him. Thus dazzled, he yielded himself a willing captive, and, figuratively, kissed the wheels of his queen's triumphant chariot, as it crashed over his broken limbs, thanking the gods in his torture that he was permitted to die so sweet a death. The frantic sonnets, the warm and melting lyrics, that he wrote at this date, are they not included in that volume of his works which is excluded from virtuous society and finds only a casual reception in bachelors' libraries? The critics spoke of them with shuddering horror—quoted them, too, in support of their opinions. Alas! they were not written for the critics: the passionate pilgrim singing them freshly on love's highway, had never an inkling then, that some day he should barter their bitter-sweet wild honey for a morsel of honest bread.

## VI.

There was never anywhere presented a clearer illustration of that olden curse, "The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children," than in the case of Sir Philip Nugent and his son.

Since Sir Philip had taken Cyrus away from Chinelyn, they had been together everywhere—at home, abroad, in London, and in the country; never separating for more than



a few weeks at a time; yet there were, perhaps, never two men so closely allied and living so intimately, who had more reserved thoughts each from the other. The recollection of their unfortunate kinship might be said to be ever present with them, but in their most private conversations they steered clear of the subject. If Cyrus had been really heir to Hadley Royal and all its great appurtenances, he could not have had freer enjoyment thereof; but he never forgot that in the due course of nature he must become an outcast, while an alien to his father's blood took his father's place. From some mistaken idea of keeping his son more firmly bound to himself, Sir Philip gave him no separate allowance, but permitted him to draw upon him for what he would, though it must have been known to him that Cyrus had already begun to develope expensive tastes, and to acquire extravagant habits such as only a very ample fortune could support.

Cyrus had been educated by a private tutor, and never having been made to find his level by roughing it through a public school, his feelings were tender almost to soreness upon many points. So far as personal beauty, strength, courage, fire, force, and talent went, he was exactly what his father had been at the same age, but he lacked his easy grace. One angry recollection chafed and fretted him continually; there was sufficient in his position to make him suspect slight and affront where none were intended, and his pride, which became more tenacious the more sensible he became of the magnitude of his misfortune, stung him incessantly. Only his intense secretiveness withheld him from betraying all he felt on this subject.

When he came to Hadley with his father, a season was approaching which had, of late, dwelt much upon his mind; a season which in most noble and wealthy families is made the occasion of rejoicing both for high and low. In three weeks more Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent would be of age—if there be any coming of age for such unhappy sons as he—and what would then be done? Would the event be celebrated, or would it be silently ignored? The neighborhood had discussed the question pretty freely, and had decided that it ought to be passed over without any observance whatever. Lady Leigh, Lady Nugent, and Lady Eleanor Lowther held the same opinion, but, as yet, Sir Philip had made no sign. Cyrus had never spoken of it to any one except

his brother, and Robert, to his extreme mortification, predicted that the epoch would go by unnoticed; he said, also, that were he Cyrus, all that he should wish for would be that the day might be forgotten—as if people ever did forget the mortifying things which privately torture their friends and neighbors. Though Sir Philip Nugent had given no indication of his intentions, it was not because the fact had slipped his memory. He had, indeed, dwelt upon the subject quite as long and quite as painfully as his son, but he came to the only right conclusion at last, and two days after Phyllis Lowther and Cyrus had had their explanation, he quietly notified it to him in the following indirect manner—

“Cyrus, my boy, your brother does not see as much of you as he has a right to expect, considering how near you are and how long you have been separated. You had better go to Lady Leigh’s next week, while I am away at Lowther Castle, for I want to be at Glenglas by the twenty-fifth, and ~~must~~ have you with me.”

“Very well, sir,” said Cyrus, with remarkable nerve. “That is, I suppose, if Lady Leigh will have me.”

“Oh, yes, she will have you; she spoke to me of it last night. My mother goes to the castle with Lady Lowther and the girls on Saturday and I shall follow on Monday. On Monday you can go into Walton.”

“How long do you remain at Lowther Castle, sir,” Cyrus asked.

“Three or four days. I shall not come down here again, but I’ll write when you must join me at Carlisle, and we will travel north together.

Cyrus felt intensely mortified, and for a few minutes he almost hated his father; his wrath would have been still fiercer had he known of the designs Lady Eleanor hoped to accomplish during Sir Philip’s stay at Lowther Castle; but of these he had no suspicion, neither, apparently, had Sir Philip himself. The traces of anger or dejection were always very legible on Cyrus’s visage, and it was soon known to what resolution his father had come respecting his birthday. The three dowagers applauded it quietly, and people in general regarded it as an earnest of what Sir Philip’s intention toward his illegitimate son would ultimately prove to be.

A considerable part of the Nugent estates were unentailed,

though Hadley Royal was strictly tied up, and Cyrus very naturally anticipated receiving a large share. "If you settle before my death you must take Ackhill," his father had once said to him, in allusion to a fine property in Warwickshire where they were staying at the time, and there is no doubt that Sir Philip's designs for him were generous to the utmost limits of his power. But individuals to whom the mere turning of a straw indicated which way the wind blew now began to predict that Sir Philip would marry again, and Mr. Tom Nugent, of the Leasowes, who was almost more than any one else interested in the question, suggested it to Cyrus. It came upon the young man's mind with all the force of a conviction; it had never occurred to him as possible, but the moment another person mentioned it, it became forthwith the likeliest thing in the world.

When Cyrus reflected upon the chances of this event, and the influence it would have upon himself and his prospects, it made him half mad. He had not been bred to any profession, and had no future of honorable independence to look forward to. He had often secretly wished that his father had given him an object in life and opportunities of freedom, and sometimes vague ideas of achieving fortune by his pen would come over him, but his indolent, self-indulgent temper always lulled him back into luxurious contentment, until Tom Nugent's suggestion showed him the Damoclean sword suspended above him by a single hair. Had there been any real confidence between Sir Philip and his son, Cyrus would have gone to him and had his anxieties appeased, but the uneasy, doubting affection which held its place always made the young man conceal from his father whatever distressed or annoyed him.

## VII.

To Phyllis Lowther, however, the evening before she was to leave Hadley, he contrived an opportunity of unbosoming himself of much that afflicted him; but Phyllis was not very sympathetic. A lover must be sunshine and warmth to please her, not cloud and chilling complaint. The ready tears came into her eyes, and she said he was so often disagreeable now. He retorted that she was tiring of him—ceasing to love him.

She replied, was there any wonder when he was always so gloomy and cross?

Lady Eleanor, judicious woman, perceived what was going on, and forebore to interfere until the quarrel seemed to have reached a climax. Then she struck in and carried her daughter off, fully determined not to allow the young lovers any opportunity of reconciliation before they parted on the morrow, and trusting to the chapter of accidents and to Phyllis's known irresolution to complete the severance afterward.

That evening also she took an opportunity of expatiating to her daughters in the privacy of her dressing-room on many things which she said lay near her heart. She observed that nothing gratified her more than to see them happy in their own way, especially if that way were reasonable and innocent; but she must express her high disapproval of idle fancies, coquetry, and the like, because they were sure to mar their chances of settling well; and she implored them to remember that their faces were their only fortunes, and that if they did not gain them handsome establishments, they had nothing to look forward to but a spinsterhood of neglect and penurious economy. The two elder graces listened with composure to this epitome of their mother's moral code, but Phyllis shuddered and wept furtively beneath the veil of her golden hair, which her maid was dressing out. She could not help thinking of the picture Cyrus had drawn of himself in London chambers, studying law and writing in the newspapers for a livelihood, and of his wife, and how miserable she would be, how much soever they might love each other—and Phyllis really did love Cyrus with all the little heart she had—especially since their silly quarrel.

Then Lady Eleanor went on to indicate from her own experience the charms of a good match. The town and country house, the regiment of servants, the profuse expenditure, the freedom from anxiety, the perpetual bath of ease and luxury in which the wife—say for instance, of such a man as Sir Philip Nugent—might revel. Phyllis's tears fell faster and faster.

The next day, after luncheon, when the great yellow chariot came to the door to transport the Lowthers to their ancestral home, Phyllis, who had not appeared before, was led out by her mother muffled to the eyes. Cyrus, who had been

in a state of burning anxiety all the morning to see her and make friends, pressed eagerly forward, but her mother and sisters quietly interposed, and she was hustled into the carriage without being permitted to speak to him or touch his hand. Every body looked laboriously unconscious of this little scene, but when the chariot was driving off, Phyllis was observed to push her mother's hand aside with passionate violence, and to lean forward to the window. Somebody pulled her back, but not before Cyrus had seen her swollen eyes and dishevelled hair, and heard her cry out between two sobs "Good-by, Cyrus!"

Her sister Caroline let it out afterward that Phyllis behaved like a little fury all the way home, defying her mamma, and wishing a thousand times that she were dead! It is a pity, but these painful events will sometimes occur in the highest and best regulated families.

Sir Philip Nugent went indoors without a word, when the Lowthers and his mother were gone, but Lady Leigh took Cyrus by the arm and walked him up and down the terrace for an hour, expostulating with him and trying to make him hear reason. She told him that there never could be any other end than disappointment to his presumptuous passion, and bade him pluck up a manly courage and daff it aside at once. But Cyrus, with that tearful face and pathetic farewell in his memory quite fresh, would take no such advice. Phyllis loved him quite enough, he was sure, to be firm for him, and he would be firm for her, bless her! Lady Leigh laughed at his raptures, said he was selfish, and Phyllis would never be any thing but miserable if he had her, for her ambition, though not full-grown, was, like her mother's, the ambition of hereditary pride and high position. Cyrus begged to differ altogether from such a view. He believed what every woman who was worthy of the name needed to make her happy was love that she reciprocated, such love as nobody could deny existed between Phyllis and himself. Lady Leigh ridiculed the Utopianism of the idea, said she knew the world, and the women of the world, better than such a fantastical young poet as himself would know them if he lived to be a hundred; declared men never were such vain fools, and never so selfish, as when they became the victims of a *grande passion*; and then she left him to his own reflections, in which the bitter and the sweet were mingled with even hand.

## VIII.

Lady Leigh quitted Hadley Royal, and returned to Walton with Lilian Carlton and Lola that afternoon, leaving Cyrus and his father to pass the intervening Sunday, before they separated for their respective visits, alone. The Leasowes Nugents had departed a day or two earlier than the Lowthers.

Here was an opportunity, if Cyrus had had the heart to avail himself of it, of coming to some explanation with his father; but that shyness of him, which no affection, indulgence, or confidence on Sir Philip's part could overcome, stood between them now. Sir Philip was no church-goer either in town or country, and Cyrus had fallen but too readily into his habits, since the Reverend Samuel Miles had been provided for otherwise than his tutor; and the long Sunday morning was spent by both in the billiard-room—for it was even against Sir Philip's principles to carry a gun on Sunday, as that would be an *active* bad example to his tenants; or else, as he remarked to his son, it was a very fine morning for sport.

It was a long while since they had been for a whole day together, without the presence of a third person, and the hours were rather irksome. They got luncheon over, and then walked out into the woods, Sir Philip affectionately taking his son's arm. He talked to him about Robert; and bade him discover if there were any way in which he could further his interests that would prove acceptable, regretted Robert's alienation from himself, and what he honestly regarded as his debasing occupation, and once he remarked that Cyrus did not seem in his usual good spirits. Then the lad might have spoken, but—

"He had no heart to grasp the fleeting hour,  
Which, like a thief, stole by with silent foot,  
In his closed hand the jewel of a life."

Perhaps half a dozen words might have changed the whole course of his life; but the courage failed him to speak them, and the chance was gone—I do not mean that they might have given him the *one* precious thing his soul coveted, but they might have prevented many a misunderstanding, many a folly, and many a sin in the future. But where is the wis-

dom of suggesting what *might* have been? Cyrus was a fatalist. "Che sarà sarà" was his reckless pioneer into sloughs of difficulty and despondency as long as he lived, and "Che sarà sarà" was never very prompt to deliver him. I believe he could rather have made a confidant of old Ben, the groom, who had taught him to ride, or of Mr. Phypys, the house-steward, who performed koo-too before him, as if he were the rightful heir of Hadley Royal, than of his father, who loved him better than any thing else in the world.

Sir Philip was possibly somewhat in the dark as to the causes of his son's discontent. I hope he was, at least, for with that contagious reserve which sometimes will separate the nearest and dearest, he refrained from forcing himself into the confidence which Cyrus withheld. If this feeling dissevers children and parents who have no cause to stand aloof from each other, we may suppose how potent it would be with these two, and how much injustice and irritation it would engender as its consequences hereafter. A *hasty* word is often productive of great evil, and a poet says we know not how much mischief may spring from an *idle* word, but a greater than he says emphatically, "A word in season, how good is it!" and for lack of this word in season, the word of confidence and good counsel, there befell what bore embittered fruit for both.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

## YOUNG LOVE'S AWAKENING.

"THE fire of love in youthful blood,  
Like what is kindled in brushwood,  
But for a moment burns;  
Yet in that moment makes a mighty noise :  
It crackles and to vapor turns,  
And soon itself destroys." *Examen Miscellaneum.*

## I.

CYRUS HAWTHORNE NUGENT had been bred with gentlemen; during those years which go most toward the formation of tastes and habits, his associates had been gentlemen; is it to be wondered at that he forgot in the fiery vanity of his youth who and what he was? But if he forgot—as since he fell in love with Phyllis Lowther he had practically done—nobody else forgot for him. For the most part women were kinder to him, gentler; few amongst them would willingly wound his feelings. But with men it was different. He stood in a false position, and there was no security about his retaining it. His brother Robert, in his useful, humble capacity, was far happier than himself. He imagined affronts, he misinterpreted glances, he fired up at half words, whose double meaning he suspected. Lady Leigh had no very pleasant time with him on the Minster Hill, and was always relieved to see him take his hat and go off to Maiden Lane to visit Robert. Robert was so patient and considerate for him; Robert gave him such a sense of strength and reliability as his restless temper at this epoch in his life sadly needed.

"There's no friend like you, Robin, no friend like my brother Robin," was his greeting one evening when he walked into the dusky little den which Mrs. Deborah Eliotson had recently permitted her master's nephew to claim as his own.



"What is amiss now, Cyr," asked Robert, cheerfully.

"Every thing, I think," was the sullen reply. On being pressed for explanation, he said that there had been a letter from his father that morning to say that he intended to prolong his visit to Lowther Castle until the following week, and that if Cyrus liked he might have the young Leasowes Nugents over at Hadley for some shooting, as they should not start for Glenglas so early as he had proposed.

"And I am bored to death at Lady Leigh's," added he, impatiently. "A house full of women and children, who all combine to amuse me when the utmost I implore is to be let alone."

Robert laughed at his brother's whimsical complaint, and suggested that he should exchange the Minster Hill for Maiden Lane.

"Come here?" repeated Cyrus, with a glance round the dark, contracted room; "no, thank you; I'd rather not."

Robert felt rather pained and confused, but he only said, quietly, "Then go back to Hadley and invite the young Leasowes Nugents."

"That I shall not, the insolents!" exclaimed Cyrus, with a gloomy fire in his eye; "I cannot suffer them!"

There it was! He had an intense jealousy and hatred of all and any who had the remotest claim on what he would consider as his own *rights*. Robert understood his feeling and regretted it extremely, because he knew what a root of bitterness it must be.

"What can my father mean by stopping all this time at Lowther Castle? it is a dull place," Cyrus presently said.

"Not dull in the shooting season, for I dare say it is full of company," replied Robert. "Then Uncle Joshua says there's a chance of a general election, and, if so, Lowther Castle is always a rallying place for the chiefs of the Tory party."

"Is it so? Well, for Whigs or Tories I care not one chip—all I want to know about is Phyllis."

"And there is no mention of her in your father's letter?"

"No, not a word—not likely to be;" and Cyrus sighed like Tom Aldin's furnace at its hottest.

Old Joshua Hawthorne had no great favor for his nephew Cyrus; he said, and truly, that the young man gave himself airs which were likely to provoke the very affronts of which he complained. Robert once got him to walk through the

varnish manufactory, but Mr. Cyrus was not impressed by the magnitude of its operations, and evidently considered it only a low concern. His brother tried to make him understand its opportunities of usefulness, told him that it employed the services and gave a living to the families of more than a hundred workmen; but Cyrus, in his aristocratic notions, voted all connected with trade as common and unclean, and would have felt himself cleared of an indignity if Robert had come out from it altogether. He refused to know Robert's friends, and greatly hurt by his pride old Peter Carlton, who had an intense desire to make the young poet's acquaintance; George Sancton, who was one of his brother's favorite companions, he only acknowledged with the air of a grand seigneur; and his visits to Miss Kibblewhite and Dorothea at the little tea-shop in the Market-place he made the subject of a ridiculous farcical poem.

Robert took all his gibes with imperturbable good-humor, even when they verged, as they often did, on bitterness. He saw that Cyrus was not happy nor in the way to become so, and his heart yearned over him with brotherly love and compassion.

At Lady Leigh's, Cyrus most affected the society of little Lola, who was very demonstrative in the affection she had conceived for him. With innocent precocious audacity she had early discovered the intrigue between himself and Phyllis Lowther, and even dared to tease him about her, saying she was cold, coquette, and had no heart—not nearly so much heart as *she*—Lola—had.

Lilian treated him with a frank unreserve which spoke volumes for her indifference; in her own mind she thought him rather a selfish young man who deemed much more highly of himself than of more deserving persons. There was no chance of Lady Leigh's design for her two favorites ever being accomplished; and when she had seen a little more of Cyrus in her own house, as a domestic character, she ceased to desire it. A young man, deeply and unfortunately in love with a woman above him, does not show to the best advantage, either amongst his intimates or in general society; and at this juncture Cyrus's strongest and least amiable characteristics came out very forcibly. His pride, his irksome vanity, his impatience, recklessness, and lack of forbearance, were displayed daily and hourly, and the Fates had written it that he should be yet more severely tried.

## II.

The brothers had agreed that as Cyrus would still be at Walton Minster on their birthday, they should spend it together either in an excursion to Eurevaux or elsewhere. Robert could have desired no better, and looked forward to the holiday with quiet satisfaction. But that morning, while he was in his den after breakfast, arranging a handsome set of books which he was going to give as a present to Cyrus, he heard a hasty unsteady step mounting the stairs, the door was dashed open, and his brother burst in.

"I've brought you some pleasant birthday news!" cried he, in a thick voice; "news you don't expect, I'll swear."

Had it been later in the day, Robert would have thought he had been drinking too much wine, he looked so wild and disordered and spoke so strangely.

"Sit down, Cyr, and tell me all about it," said he, leaning his hand on his shoulder and pressing him into a chair.

"My father's going to be married," he said, "married to—to Phyllis!" The last word came out like a shriek; and, flinging off his brother's grasp, he began to stride about the room, indulging in a storm of imprecations and invectives that made Robert shudder. But presently there was a break in his voice. "They took her out of my way because they dared not trust her with me," he said, "and they have persuaded her to believe that it was all fancy: she is a weak little fool, but she loved me—ay, and she would have gone on loving me, if they would only have let her! And to give her to *my father*! curse them all!" He flung himself across the table, groaning and writhing in his torture; then sobbing and swearing and raving like a maniac. Presently he exclaimed, clenching his hand vengefully, "If my father knows all—and I believe he does—I'll never forgive him, so help me——"

"Hush, Cyrus! I hope very sincerely he does not," interrupted Robert, gravely.

"I would not trust him. He is a Nugent, and that blood never lets any scruple or any law stand in its way, as you and I know to our cost," replied Cyrus, with intense bitterness. "Phyllis is a lovely little thing; very tempting to a man like him, if he thought she liked him, and she can't help herself. She must flatter and beguile whomsoever comes in her way, and get them to worship her."

"That would lessen my disappointment at losing her, if I were in your place, Cyr," Robert interposed.

"You don't know what you are talking about—it would do nothing of the kind," returned Cyrus, warmly. "But it is not Phyllis's fault; it can't be her fault. Don't I know how those fashionable, leather-hearted mothers use their girls? persuading them that they have not got any feelings to suffer at all, until it is too late to help themselves. Poor little Phyllis nearly cried her eyes out the night before they took her away from Hadley, and now, I dare say, they have talked her into a notion that she will be very happy with my father. But I know better, I know better."

There was a low, disagreeable tone of menace in these last words which Robert did not like.

"What do you mean to do, Cyrus?" his brother asked.

"Do! what *can* I do? Rush over to Lowther Castle and demand my fair one at the hands of my father? Or put a pistol to my ear and blow out my brains? Either process would be intensely melodramatic and silly," replied he, with a forced laugh, which could not hide his angry suffering. "*Do*; I can *do* nothing."

"You have not told me yet how you received the news."

"It came in a shoal of letters. One from that scheming Jezebel, my Lady Lowther, to my Lady Leigh. A second from my father to myself, and a third, a little note from Phyllis. A poor little lying note, praying me to forget her, for that she mistook a passing fancy for a true affection, and that she is sure we were never meant for each other and could not be happy together. She is ambitious and proud, she tells me, and loves show, and she has a duty to fulfil toward her family; she feigns to be writing it in secret, but I know her mother stood by and dictated every word. These tricks are all fair in dealing with me—I can have no rights to claim."

"And Sir Philip Nugent—how does he open the subject?"

"Frankly enough to the ear. He has determined to marry again, and the youngest sister of his esteemed friend Sir William Lowther has accepted his proposals. They will reside chiefly at Hadley Royal, and, as the establishment and family will be on a different footing, would I not prefer to be independent of it—to have apartments in London or to travel abroad? He offers me an allowance of eight hundred

a year, and says his intentions with regard to Ackhill will not be in any way altered by his marriage. And he hopes that the same affectionate feeling will continue to subsist between us as heretofore—as if *that* were possible.”

“What a pity you did not begin by making your father your friend in the matter!” said Robert.

“Oh! he must have seen and known what would be the issue from the beginning, only he has his quiet way of not meddling in matters that will right themselves in the end as he desires. I see the whole plot now from first to last. Phyllis was brought to Hadley for my father, and I, infatuated fool, conceived that she might be for *me*! Why, she told me herself that her people would rather bury her alive than let me have her, and it’s true! But my father, I can’t forgive my father!”

Then followed another stormy outburst of invective and passionate denunciation; the young man felt himself wounded in his pride and his vanity as well as in his love; his worst failings betrayed themselves in his rage.

“If my rival were any one but my father, I could have my revenge, but now it is impossible!” cried he. “My young lady herself draws back—will I return that tress of hair she gave me? *No*, I will not! Her family despises me and my own father supplants me. Here’s a pretty series of situations for a play.”

Cyrus’s mockery at his own pain sounded even worse to Robert than his anger; that fashion of laughing away a grief seems to me always the most pitiful way of using it.

“Come out,” said Robert, presently; “let us get away into the country this glorious morning.”

“Glorious, is it? It did not seem so to me as I came along. I have no heart any more for your rural delights—let me get back to London as fast as I can—that’s the place to rid one’s self of wretchedness:” he jumped up and began to walk through and through the room violently. Robert hardly knew his brother in this mood; he seemed quite beside himself, quite reckless and self-abandoned.

The same scene with very slight variations went on until nearly noon, when Cyrus himself proposed to leave the house; but in the streets a hot sun was blazing, and when they had got so far, they turned into the shady cool of the Minster and sat down. As it happened, they had stopped under an old monument of the sixteenth century, dedicated,

as the Latin inscription stated, to "Gulielmus, filius bastardus" of Hugh Nugent, of Hadley. The inscription went on to detail his valorous deeds of arms against the French and Spaniards in the Low Countries, and mention was made that in his youth he had voyaged with Columbus, and been one in his ship when Europeans first sighted the New World. A small tablet of white marble, festooned with cherubs' faces, below the more conspicuous slab, recorded the names of his children, three, who all died in infancy, and of Rosamunda, "filia secunda" of John Nevil, Baron Nevil, Earl of Warwick and Arundel.

Cyrus read the inscription twice over, and then called Robert's notice to it. Robert had observed it often before.

"Gulielmus, filius bastardus," said Cyrus, "and yet he got a wife out of that grand old race of Nevils. Yes, in those days a man was a man for a' that and a' that. It is not so now——"

"Don't start off in your disappointment with that idea," interposed Robert, cheerfully; "there is as much appreciation in the world for good and true metal as ever there was. Have courage, dear Cyr, and you will fight through this trouble successfully enough."

"But isn't it a bitter shame—a cruel shame?" broke out the young fellow, passionately.

"It is very hard."

Thus after young Love's dream came young Love's rude awakening.

"I shall not go to Glenglas with my father, after this," Cyrus said, presently; "I could not keep the peace. I shall go to town at once."

"Stay at Walton a little longer," pleaded Robert; "stay and let me see you more settled."

"Thou hast an ingenuous mind, O my brother!" exclaimed Cyrus, in a spirit of bitter raillery; "I find no consolation in purling streams, or counsel in solemn stones. I must seek my diversions elsewhere—in less innocent places, I am afraid."

"Don't think you will get any real relief in doing wrong, Cyr, for that is a grand mistake," Robert said, gently; "always remember our mother."

"Poor old mother! She was very fond of us, Robin, wasn't she? I'm sure her heart aches for me now, if they know any thing in that other world of what is going on in

this. She never could bear to see me thwarted or crossed, could she?"

After that mention of their mother, the young men were both a long while silent. Cyrus's visage looked very sallow, and dreary and reckless under his black hair; its expression haunted Robert sadly through many a long day—haunted him longer than any other expression he had ever seen on his beloved brother's face.

### III.

The next morning early, Robert took the forgotten present of books that he had destined for his brother, and went up the Minster Hill to deliver them in person. Sempronius opened the door, and little Lola immediately ran out to him, exclaiming—

"He is gone! my dear, good, kind Cyrus is gone!"

Robert asked explanation; "Gone! where?" Sempronius said would he step into Lady Leigh's morning room, and wait until she came down stairs? No one knew when or why Mr. Cyrus left the house, unless it were her ladyship.

Lola had evidently had a good cry for the loss of her friend.

"He never kissed me good-by, and I love him more than all the world," sobbed she; "he knows I do."

Robert was touched by the unconscious pathos of her childlike reproach, and his own heart echoed it.

Presently in came my Lady Leigh, supporting her slow steps by the aid of her gold-headed stick. She looked very high and mighty, and her black brows were curved into a haughty frown. Robert said he had come to ask her about his brother.

"Am I your brother's keeper, sir?" cried she, irefully. "I know nothing of him nor desire to know. He is insolent. He forgot himself with me last night, and I bade him leave my house; and he is gone."

"Knowing what you did, your ladyship might have had a little patience with him," Robert said, gravely.

"I was very fond of Cyrus—I felt toward him as toward a son—but there are limits to my forbearance," returned Lady Leigh, with a perceptible sinking in her voice. "He

was unreasonable; he has all the worst qualities of our family exaggerated to an insufferable extent. Am I answerable for his disappointment? Is it I who withhold Phyllis Lowther from him? If he has the pith and courage of a man, let him go and claim her in spite of all; but if he has not—if he takes her first rejection for final, let him not blame any but himself. Where is his independence—where is his self-reliance?”

“I fear, madam, that for such as he there is very little of either.”

“What do you mean? I confess that I think less highly of his powers than I used to think. He is sudden and eager, but he has no stamina, no purpose, no persistence. I do not believe he has the force or strength to say, ‘I will.’”

“My brother’s worst faults arise out of his position—they are natural to it—but no one suffers from them as he suffers himself.”

“I wish I had never seen his face! if any harm comes of this, my nephew will lay it to my account.”

“Does your ladyship know where Cyrus is gone?”

“No.” Lady Leigh’s proud visage showed some darkening of sorrow.

“Did he give you any impression that he might go to Lowther Castle, and attempt to see Phyllis or his father?”

“I cannot tell you what he will do: I imagine he will go abroad; he likes Paris.”

Robert, greatly disheartened, turned to leave the room. If Cyrus fell amongst wild companions at this crisis, the worst was to be feared for him, with his ardent temperament and keen love of pleasure. Lady Leigh saw what Robert’s thoughts were, and spoke to relieve him.

“Young men would be young men,” she said, with that loose morality of tone that sits so ill on any woman’s lips; “but he would settle by and bye. She did not think there was any real ground for uneasiness. Of course, she should let Sir Philip know immediately what had happened, and he might be relied on to do whatever was most judicious.”

With this faint consolation, and poor little Lola’s wistful black eyes following him, Robert took his departure.

“Why did he not come to me? surely he could have trusted *me*!” he kept saying to himself, as he walked home. Cyrus’s conduct had wounded him to the quick.



## IV.

When Cyrus was talking with his brother the day before his sudden departure from Walton, it had not appeared to strike either of them that there was such a course open for him as claiming Phyllis whether her friends approved or not; or if it did strike them, appreciating the difficulties in the way, they both held their peace. But one of Lady Leigh's fiery, taunting speeches, at the same time that it cruelly hurt his pride, gave the impulsive young man a revival of his hopes, and the next day found him in full career toward Lowther Castle.

Arriving at the village of Lowther toward evening, he stopped at the inn which bore the sign of the family arms, and ordered dinner like any ordinary traveler. The landlord eyed him inquisitively, thought he had seen his face somewhere before, but refrained from making any remark. It happened, however, that Lady Eleanor's coachman, who had been at Hadley Royal, and who possessed that version of his mistress's affairs which is wont to circulate in servants' halls, saw Cyrus ride by the lodge gates; and before the dowager seated herself at her son's table that night, she had been apprised of his arrival, news which quite spoilt her repast.

There was a solemn state dinner-party at the Castle that day, at which Mistress Phyllis appeared in great beauty, as Sir Philip Nugent's affianced. There was no question whatever of a stifled sorrow when you looked at her soft, fair face. She had not seen Cyrus for a fortnight, and during that *long* interval Sir Philip had been most assiduous and polite. Cyrus could not have come on a more inopportune errand at a more inopportune season. She was just enjoying all the flattery and encouragement incidental to her new position, and, perhaps, contrasting it mentally with the state of things that preceded it.

Let us not blame her too severely. Of course, my sisters, you are more constant, more virtuous, more stable-minded altogether than this fluttering little moth. You would not have been diverted from your first love by maternal persecution or the chance of a great match; but poor Phyllis was. I hear you call her a frivolous, heartless, despicable little person. Mesdames, I assure you there was not a worldly-wise moral axiom, not a sagacious precept, that

dropped from Lady Eleanor Lowther's lips when she was in her most moral and sagacious moods, that her daughter did not live largely to exemplify and improve upon in her honored matronhood afterward.

Let us not fling stones. We have each our private weakness, cowardice, or sin. I have known of my own knowledge, a handsome young gentlewoman, who, for fear of what folks might say, went to a ball and danced vigorously all night, while her betrothed lover lay dead in his mother's house. You will say she had no feeling. Perhaps her heart ached through the dances—I can't tell—she was a very pleasant person in common life, and made a comfortable, affectionate mate to the man she married when she was consoled. I have known also another of our sex who would dilate to strangers and the most indifferent people by the hour together on the subject of her lover, who died like a brave soldier on the field of battle. She would expatiate on her sentiments and sufferings as if she were anatomizing a vegetable substance instead of her own heart. She had no delicacy, you exclaim; I reply that you cannot have all the virtues combined in one individual, and that, instead of the popular angel-woman whom we all of us admire and none of us believe in, I offer you in Phyllis, not a type of what women should be, but a type of what *some* women are.

Cyrus at his inn dined without much appetite, and then gave his mind to the composing of a letter to Phyllis. He sent it by the hand of a trusty messenger, and it was safely delivered to the young lady herself at curling-hair time. She turned it over and over, and colored a little, and then strayed into her mother's dressing-room next door, overflowing with proper and dutiful feelings.

"Mamma," said she, rather shyly: "Cyrus has written to me again."

Lady Eleanor expected as much. "But you have not read the letter, my love?" she inquired.

"No, mamma," and Phyllis exhibited the seal unbroken.

"Good child! There, leave it with me, and I will decide to-morrow morning what is best to be done." Lady Eleanor gave her daughter the embrace of maternal approval, and dismissed her to her pillow with a benediction.

Lady Eleanor Lowther would decide to-morrow morning what was best to be done! Virtuous woman! excellent, admirable, self-sacrificing mother! She would permit her

natural rest to be disturbed by reflection, and on the morrow she would *decide*. How simple, how easy, how efficacious would her decision be! Grand, Napoleonic domestic minds like hers grasp a whole situation with a mental finger and thumb as it were—no need for them to put forth the power of palm and wrist as weaker folk must. The quiet way in which the great businesses of life are transacted by some people is marvelous to me. I have seen more noise and bother made about the ill-cooking of a family joint for dinner than over the fatal crisis which was the ruin of a lifetime!

As for Phyllis, she lay awake a few minutes longer than usual, wondering what Cyrus said in that unopened letter of his, and then, becoming drowsy, she slept the sound sleep of the young and healthy. While she slept Cyrus haunted the precincts of the Castle all the night through, passing as the hours passed from hope and expectation to dismal disappointment and despair. What he had proposed to her in that letter will never be known because it was never read. Perhaps he proposed a lover's flight—perhaps only a moonlight walk—who can tell?

I think myself the young fellow was much to be pitied. He certainly loved Phyllis Lowther with all the ardency of his ardent nature, though I do not say he will love her, or even speak quite respectfully of her, ten years hence. He was young and fresh now; he had a thousand romantic illusions in which, by and by, he came to have no faith at all. I do not set him up as a model of a manly character, but I say there were warmth, and passion, and honesty, and credulity, and some generosity in his disposition at this date, mingled in with worse things. But the worse things were not on the surface. There is a certain hypocrisy which social life demands from every body. People wear moral and mental clothing as they wear physical clothing. Who dare say all he knows of his neighbor or half he knows of himself? The inner man may be conjectured from what the outer man displays or betrays; and for the rest, whatever is merely suspected on general principles goes for nothing, while the individual happily gets the benefit of the doubt. I suppose a man in his senses would no more think of wilfully exposing his unpicturesque side, where are the little crooked ways of meanness and selfishness and self-idolization, than he would think of going to a dinner party

in his shirt-sleeves. The inner life of all men and the inner life of all women will remain to the world's end a private individual business; the shrewdest moralist, the keenest satirist, the most far-sighted philosopher, can give us no more than types of human nature drawn from their own knowledge and perception of what is in man by examination of themselves; and were any one of them to profess on his oath to give a full, true, and particular account and revelation of his moral and mental economy, we should all know that he had kept back something of his best and a very great deal of his worst—that he had drawn himself not as he was, but only as he wished to appear. I think it is Rousseau who says that there is no man who has not some odious vices: like all sweeping generalities, it is open to question; for odious vices read weaknesses, failings, and errors, and we shall, perhaps, be nearer the truth: when Rousseau said that, the supposition is he spoke out of the abundance of his own heart. Cyrus Hawthorne was guiltless of odious vices, but he was full of imperfections, like other young men; his character was not plain reading, nor yet was it more than ordinarily complex. There were hieroglyphics of action by which the mental and moral working within him was indicated, and which I have endeavored, in part, to interpret, and, on the whole, I am inclined to think that he would have been a better man if he had had a better fate.

He walked about Lowther Castle in a dreary state of mind, very unhappy, and angry, and resentful. He knew Phyllis was not of the highest order of women, but he did not love her the less for that. It is not always the most deserving of the sex who inspire the strongest passions. Men have done wonderfully silly things for very indifferent women—have died for them even, if history does not tell tales—and for an angel men could not do more. But there was no question of dying yet with Cyrus. When he was tired out with his solitary meandering he went back to his inn and to bed and to sleep. Before he awoke in the morning Lady Eleanor Lowther had decided upon what was best to be done. She had called her son, Sir William, into council, and had stated her case, reserving very little of it, for a woman.

“Oh, the youngster must be mad to presume so!” was his first very natural exclamation. “Phyllis never encour-

aged him. What does he mean by coming here? Give me the letter, and I'll go down to him and send him about his business."

"Gently, then, William," pleaded the excellent mother; "remember how Sir Philip is bound up in his son."

"I should think there will soon be an end of that now; but, perhaps, I had better ask him to dinner," suggested the baronet, who was well-intentioned, but exceedingly obtuse.

"No, no. Tell him to take himself quietly and reasonably out of the way; that is the only thing to be done. Tell him how Phyllis herself desires that he should trouble her no more, and let him know how far matters are advanced with his father."

Sir William Lowther walked down to the inn, a fine-looking English gentleman, rather pompous, but imposing, and was introduced into the room where Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent sat at breakfast. Sir William was beautifully cool; Cyrus was greatly flurried. The interview lasted barely ten minutes, and closed with a bow of distant civility on either side. Cyrus could have gnashed his teeth with rage when the well-born gentleman was gone. Lady Eleanor asked an account of his embassy when her son returned.

"Oh! the young gentleman was tractable enough when I gave him back his own letter, and repeated what Phyllis said. He was quite answered in respect to his unreasonable pretensions."

"How did he look?" Lady Eleanor asked.

"Rather haggard, but very proud and defiant. I declare I felt sorry for the poor lad. He is very like his father in the face. Is Sir Philip gone out shooting? I missed him from the library when I came in."

"Most likely he is; I hope he has not gone down toward the village; a meeting between him and Cyrus would be awkward just now. He has not seen Phyllis this morning; she has a headache, so I have kept her in my dressing-room to sleep it off."

Phyllis's headache kept her in her mother's dressing-room all day. She was rather nervous, startled, and shivery, and cross with it, but it improved before night. From her post by the window she had seen a well-known figure riding away from Lowther—her heart was relieved when he was gone.

About a week after Robert Hawthorne heard from his brother an account of what he had attempted, and that as the result of his disappointment he was amusing himself in Paris.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

## EVERY DAY.

"LET the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act, act in the living Present,  
Heart within and God o'erhead."

LONGFELLOW, *A Psalm of Life*.

## I.

THAT the marriage of Sir Philip Nugent was not to be a long-deferred event soon became evident from an order which was received in Maiden Lane, almost immediately after the rumor of it became public.

The firm of Hawthorne and Co. had always been employed at Hadley Royal, as at most of the great houses in the neighborhood of Walton Minster; and a letter now came from the steward with his master's commands that the place should be repainted, and put into thorough ornamental repair by Christmas. This order put the folks in Maiden Lane on their metal; they had had a dull time latterly, and it gave them fresh impetus. Tom Aldin was in his glory, and old Mr. Reuben Otley, keen man of business as ever, declared he would overlook all the work himself, as it would probably be the last time he should ever have the chance. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, who grew daily fonder of his easy-chair and the pious society of Mistress Deborah Eliotson, gladly relinquished all the care to his more active partner, who, every morning drove off in his gig, sometimes alone and sometimes with George Sancton beside him, directed the progress of his work-people, dined in the steward's room, and returned home in time for tea.

"You never take your turn at Hadley Royal, Mr. Robert; now I should have thought that it would interest *you*," observed Mrs. Deborah Eliotson, addressing her master's nephew as they sat at breakfast one morning, about a month after the work was begun.

"I am going over to-day," replied Robert.

"Are you, indeed, Robert? how so? There is surely no need, unless you wish it," interposed his uncle.

"I do wish it, sir; Mr. Otley has sent word into the office that he shall not be able to go this morning, and it is fittest that I should supply his absence."

"You will turn out a capital painter and varnisher after all, Mr. Robert. I would not have believed it unless I had seen it, with your grand notions and all that," said Mistress Deborah Eliotson, laughing a long, inward, chuckling laugh, which was extremely unpleasant to see and hear.

"But, Robert, I'll bestir myself for once; I should like to look over the fine old place again before I go to my easy-chair," persisted the head of the firm, kindly.

"Then I will drive you there, sir, and we shall see it together," Robert answered, in a tone that would not be gainsaid.

"No need for both of us to go, nephew; if you are bent upon it, I'll stay at home now, and make my inspection when the work is done. These early frosts tell upon my old bones, and give me warning twinges of my rheumatism."

"Let us be thankful to Providence when we are free from pain, and endeavor to keep so," interjected Mistress Deborah Eliotson, solemnly, and then trickling off into that foolish laugh again. Nobody took any notice, though the echo went on gurgling in her throat for a minute or two after the full sound had ceased, and her gray green eyes glistened moistly, as if she possessed some wonderful source of merriment within her own mind. She did not seem to have so much command over herself as formerly, and at times her astutely benign visage became perfectly vacuous. She was very much changed for the worse since first Robert Hawthorne knew her. Her dress was no longer the perfection of Quakerish delicacy and neatness, and, though she continued to read her good books and to quote her moral texts as profusely as ever, the servant said her language to her was far from choice, and that when she was shut up alone in the parlor or her bedroom, she would keep on laughing and chattering to herself for half an hour together like a crazy magpie. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne himself had noticed a curious change in his old favorite, but he was not aware of the extent of it, for her craft appeared to grow as her moral power vacillated. Her very disagreeable laughter, and a habit she had taken up



of suspecting every body about her of evil designs against her, were the things that annoyed him most; but even then he did not much regard, while she attended assiduously as ever to his personal comforts, and soothed his mind with excellent readings aloud of nights.

When the Hadley Royal business was settled and in the midst of a pause which followed the discussion, she suddenly exclaimed, pointing to the piece of buttered toast which she had just taken upon her plate, "Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, there is that appearance upon my bread again—a sprinkling of white powder. Please to look at it."

"My dear Mrs. Eliotson, I see nothing the matter with it," said her master, when he had put on his spectacles to examine it. "Robert, your eyes are younger than ours—can you discern any thing peculiar?"

"Nothing whatever, sir."

Mrs. Eliotson snatched her plate out of Robert's hand and carried it to the window. "It is there, whether you can see it or not," said she, angrily. "White powder quite thick. It is some of the people in the office who have done it."

"Pray sit down and eat your breakfast like a Christian, my good Mrs. Eliotson," cried old Mr. Joshua, laughing. "You are full of fancies."

"Fancies, sir! I never had a fancy in my life. Can I not believe the evidence of my own eyes? That bread is poisoned—poisoned throughout. I shall not eat it—I shall have some eggs; it is impossible to get the poison into *them*."

"I am afraid you will not find so many eggs wholesome for you—try the bread. If it does not harm us, it will not harm you."

"I shall not risk it. I shall go across the Market-place and ask Miss Kibblewhite for some breakfast. *Her* bread is always good."

"And so is yours, ma'am. You make our bread, do you not?"

Mrs. Eliotson gave no answer, but, laughing softly and continuously, she began to crumble up a piece which she had cut from the loaf upon her plate. "All full of arsenic from one end to the other," she soliloquised. "And the people in the office have done it."

Robert never took much notice of the housekeeper's vagaries; he thought she was growing imbecile in her old age, and humored her accordingly. "I am going out in a

few minutes, shall I send you in a loaf from the baker's?" he asked her.

"And doctor it before it gets here? No, I *thank* you—I think not." The old housekeeper's eyes twinkled as if she thought herself supernaturally clever to detect this branch of the conspiracy against her, and as Robert was preparing to set off to Hadley about a quarter of an hour after, she issued from the front door in her cloak and calash, which she had recently persisted in wearing at all times and in all weathers. "You are one of the people in the office that I allude to, and that *devil* Tom Aldin is another," hissed she, with a significant, spiteful grin and wag of her head; "and it shall be proclaimed on the housetops before long!"

She walked away very quickly, and George Sancton, who was helping to put some things into the gig which Robert had to take over to Hadley, looked after her, saying—

"I am sure Pussy ought not to be allowed to go out alone; she is so odd. Dorothea told me some boys were following and shouting after her yesterday in Wheelgate. I do think she is losing her wits."

"And so do I, but she is quite harmless," replied Robert.

"That's more than she was when she had her senses, but I would not trust her to remain so. She has got a mischievous eye."

"True, but that she always had. However, I'll beware of her this time," and Robert jumped into the gig and drove off.

## II.

Robert Hawthorne had never been at Hadley Royal before. He had seen the house from a distance, but he had never been within its walls. His coming now was solely of his own choice. He was a tradesman, and would do his appointed work in tradesmanlike fashion, without permitting either fact or fancy to interfere with it. Had he been the *head* of the firm, he might have declined the Hadley Royal patronage altogether; but he was *not* the head of the firm, and therefore he acted as he did. When he got out of the gig in the stable-yard, and walked into the house through

the servants' offices, he tried to feel as if he were going about any other business elsewhere, but not very successfully.

When Robert was excited, he always carried his head high and spoke quickly and imperatively, both of which he did now when he encountered Mrs. Clavers, the housekeeper. The dame, quite involuntarily, dropped him a courtesy, not knowing him in the least, but guessing from his air and tone that he must be a gentleman come over from Walton to view the fine collection of pictures. A few words undeceived her, and then, with a furtive glance at his face and a repetition of the respectful obeisance (for all the world about Walton knew who Robert Hawthorne was when they heard his name), she led the way to the hall where a party of grainers was at work. After a few minutes' silent inspection of what was going on, Robert had overcome his inward tumult of feeling so far as to pass from one part of the house to another where work was being done without showing any signs whatever of disturbance. The young man was not phlegmatic, not dull of feeling, but he had a wonderful self-control. Of course, those who knew his countenance intimately could discern a firmer compression of lip, a graver steadfastness of eye, than usual; but Robert was a favorite amongst the workmen, and though such as knew his history could not help wondering how he felt, not one of them was curiously observant of him.

While he was overlooking the operations that were proceeding in the hall, Mr. Phypys, the house steward, came in, having been informed by Mrs. Clavers who it was that had come from Walton to direct the painters that day. He was an old servant in the family, and filled to overflowing with respect for every offset of the stock. With Mr. Reuben Otley he was hand and glove, but on no account would he have ventured on any familiarity with Robert Hawthorne; and when he gave him some instructions which he had received from his master by post that morning, it was with an air of craving indulgence for intruding such matters on his attention. Robert listened to what he had to communicate with the most matter-of-fact air in the world, entering certain points in his memorandum-book, lest he should forget them.

He had laid aside his cap and stood bareheaded under the great centre window of the hall while he was doing this, with the light streaming down full upon him. He was a

very fine figure of a man, as the old family servant said to himself, athletic but graceful, and with a natural dignity of port, as all the Nugents were. His visage was grand, too; amongst all that great gathering of his progenitors who dignified the lofty panels round the walls, there was not a nobler face than his.

Lady Leigh had professed to think that his trade would degrade him morally and physically, but there are some men whom nothing can degrade, and Robert was one of them. His occupation was not a mean task-work to him, but a worthy business of life; he never had been, and never was ashamed of it, and therefore it never could become a shame to him. There was less talk in these times than nowadays, about working classes and middle classes and upper classes and this order of men and that order of men, but upon the whole I think there was more general heed given to the plain precept of doing our duty in the station of life to which it had pleased God to call us. There was more simplicity of feeling and manners, and less striving and jealousy, as it seems to me, and Robert Hawthorne had had his early training amongst those who, while holding themselves independently, honestly, and discreetly in their own condition, still felt a respectful humility toward their betters, as the old Church Catechism has it. But in this deference there was no servility; in fact, the imitation and aping and emulation which have obtained in some quarters since are far more akin to servility than the decent respect which natural and divine laws impose—and there can be no doubt which generates the most christian feeling.

In the course of his business to and fro the house, Robert entered the long drawing-room where hung that fine portrait of his brother Cyrus which Lady Emily Lowther had so longed to depose. Her pre-visions were coming true already, for just as he appeared two men were removing it under the superintendence of Mrs. Clavers. Robert could not refrain from asking what was to be done with it; and the house-keeper replied apologetically that it was to go into her master's study—she believed that a picture of the Lady Nugent who *was* to be was intended to hang on the vacant panel by Sir Philip.

Robert thought compassionately of his brother, and as the portrait was being carried off he followed to see where it was placed. It was put up over the chimney-piece, and Mrs.

Clavers tried to explain to him in how good a light it was, and then, what was, perhaps, more to the purpose, added, "My master has been used to sit in this room more than in any other in the house whenever he has been at Hadley, sir, so the picture is not put out of the way like."

Robert felt grateful to the good old dame for the kind feeling that prompted the speech, and showing it in his reply she took courage to lead him into the room which she said Mr. Cyrus always occupied when he came over.

Poor Cyr! *he* would never occupy it again!

There was a little picture on the mantelshelf which caused Robert's face to flush hotly as he took it into his hand to examine. It was his mother's portrait—that copy of one Sir Philip Nugent possessed somewhere out of sight—which Cyrus had once spoken to him about. The original had been painted when first she went abroad, but the copy preserved the lovely innocent girl's face quite as well; nothing could be more sweetly candid, more captivating in expression. There was a string of pearls round her fair throat, and her dress was richly gay, as might be expected in a young creature lifted suddenly from a humble to a luxurious position, and surrounded with flattery and happiness which she thought would last for ever. Robert could scarcely bear to let it go—that poor heart-broken mother he remembered had once been like *this*.

"Mr. Phypps had a letter about that picture only yesterday, sir," said Mrs. Clavers, in an undertone; "Mr. Cyrus wished it to be sent to you to keep for him. I hope that does not mean the young gentleman is coming here no more!"

"Indeed, I cannot tell."

"I will have it packed and put into the gig. You will perhaps like to take it away to-day, sir?" Robert acquiesced.

There were scarcely ten minutes spent in this inquisition, and he was again the solid man of business. Mrs. Clavers and Mr. Phypps confided to each other afterward that they could not make him out at all, but they thought him very like Sir Philip in one respect—that he would not let anybody see what he felt. When dinner-time arrived, instead of being shown into the steward's room, as the better class of tradesfolks who came to Hadley always were, Robert was served alone in the study, with his brother's portrait looking down upon him; and probably the young man felt relieved that he was not to be familiarized with his father's

servants, for he was obliged to come frequently afterward to Hadley Royal in consequence of Mr. Reuben Otley's being taken ill—obliged to continue to come, indeed, until the house was completed for the reception of Sir Philip Nugent and his young wife.

### III.

That was during the first week in the new year.

The marriage took place in London as the most central rallying point for the members of both families, and Sir Philip brought his bride down to Hadley for the honeymoon. The tenants gave them a very joyful reception, and were afterward regaled with a sumptuous dinner, to which the trades-people employed by the family were also bidden. Nobody went from the firm of Hawthorne and Co.

Walton Minster made a nine days' wonder of the wedding. There was a vast deal of visiting and driving and riding to and fro, and people were never tired of expatiating on the extreme youth and beauty of the bride. Lady Nugent and Lady Leigh returned home triumphant, bringing with them Sophia and Caroline Lowther to share in the festivities, but Cyrus never appeared upon the scene at all. Nobody but his brother knew where he was or what he was doing, until Sir William Lowther, writing to his mother from Paris, mentioned incidentally having met him at one of the theatres; from which it appeared that his troubles were alleviated, and that he was living the ordinary life of fashionable society. Young men like Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent never wear the willow very long; there is quite too much fire and vivacity in their young blood for that. If he continued to suffer at all, his pangs were most likely pangs of rage, jealousy, and mortified vanity; he could scarcely retain tenderness for a not too excellent woman who was irretrievably lost to him. No. I think he was consoled.

Being in and out at Peter Carlton's nearly every day, and seeing Lilian often, Robert heard a great deal about the young Lady Nugent. Her charm of manner fascinated everybody. She was so gay, so *spirituelle*, so generous, so kind, so *truly* good and charitable! Ah! the sunshine of prosperity is good for all of us, and we too could afford to have many pleasant virtues on ten thousand a year! Dorothea Sancton, who had a judgment not easily beguiled, was

delighted with her. Dorothea had been commissioned to embroider a set of chairs for her young ladyship's boudoir, and had received her more than once in the bay-windowed parlor to settle the design—scarlet and white lilies with leaves done in silk upon a ground of superfine sky-blue cloth.

Robert Hawthorne also soon became familiar with her appearance, but he did not think her so lovely by many degrees as Lilian Carlton. She had not yet put on that *grande air* for which she was afterward distinguished, and her face and figure were too girlish for her position. The first time he saw her she was riding a rough little Shetland pony by the side of Sir Philip who was on foot; she was laughing merrily and her blonde hair, loosened by the wind, was hanging about her neck like a child's. She wore a velvet hat with a white feather in it tipped with scarlet. It was a long time, many folks said, since Walton streets had seen any thing so pretty as Sir Philip Nugent's girl-wife. She stopped at a small house at the foot of the Minster Hill with a garden court before it and a queer projecting window garlanded with a grapevine, and immediately there rushed out three lank-limbed boys and a very pretty girl half grown who almost pulled her off her pony in their eager delight to bring her indoors to their mother—the lieutenant's widow, poor runaway Julia—whom she had brought to Walton and established in this queer comfortable house, where her boys were within reach of a good grammar-school education, and herself in society that did not slight her for her poverty; but Phyllis did not suffer her to be poor now—Phyllis had sisterly affections and pitied Julia. When people extolled the young wife for her goodness of heart, they were not so very far wrong; she used her influence with Sir Philip judiciously, and found abundant opportunities of benefiting her family which other young women might have neglected or turned to their own selfish advantage. She won golden opinions from all kinds of people, and was, no doubt, much improved since her very successful marriage. Sir Philip did not worship her, but he was very fond of her, very considerate, and generous and unexacting, and her position gave her exactly that sort of power, and luxury, and pleasure which she was formed very keenly to appreciate. Being well contented herself, she was in the frame of mind which with most people best conduces to contenting others.

When Robert Hawthorne met his father, some sort of

acknowledgment always passed between them, and young Lady Nugent after a while joined in it. She would give him one of those soft, demure looks from under her brows, and gently incline her head, and raise it again, looking straight before her very brightly—no other woman ever had the like air. Robert always spoke favorably of his father's wife when he spoke of her at all; that magnetic glance of hers subdued his anger against her; he thought she might be less to blame in Cyrus's affair than he had been disposed to fancy. I do not profess to explain her power, but it is clear she must have possessed some special fascination, or Robert Hawthorne would never, even in his own mind, have made himself her apologist. She was one of those select few to whom all things are forgiven; for whom the very virtuous find a plea in every case.

#### IV.

Cyrus chose to remain in Paris, writing to his brother but rarely, and to his father never. Sir Philip Nugent must have known by this time—even if he had not known it all along—the cause of the young man's estrangement; whether he did or not, is a point which never can be cleared now; and it was one on which everybody tacitly agreed to preserve silence. Mr. Cyrus was gone abroad, and preferred to stay there; he had his own taste, and his own circle, and naturally wished to enjoy his freedom. The matter, on the whole, was very quietly and easily arranged.

Robert alone, perhaps, did not think so. He had an absorbing love for his brother, and never recollected him as he had seen him last without deep anxiety and regret. He knew that it wanted but such a disappointment as he had sustained to give his violent character a downward tendency, and he feared the worst for him if he should throw off the few restraints he acknowledged. How he was really living remained a mystery until about a year after his sudden retreat from Walton, when Sir Philip Nugent found himself called upon to pay a shoal of debts which his son had contracted. He discharged them at once, but intimated that henceforward Cyrus must keep his expenses within the limits of his allowance, and not look to him for help beyond it. The young man was incensed either at the rebuke



• itself, or at its being conveyed to him through his father's solicitor, but it did not induce him to practice moderation any the more.

While there was a doubt how he was living, Robert tried to hope that he might have fallen on studious ways, and be cultivating in seclusion his gifts of genius; but the true state of things was very far from that. The only composition that he did put forth was a satire in the heroic measure, which was immediately bought up, suppressed, and never reprinted. Robert heard a rumor of it, but he never saw it, and it was perhaps as well for his peace of mind that he did not. People who get an inkling of everything, whispered that it had offended Sir Philip Nugent mightily, and that he had retrenched his son's allowance in consequence; but the general public never knew, for certain, even whether there had been such a satire published or not. Those who had their interest in it kept it very hushed, but Cyrus, where he could be injured, assuredly got the discredit of having written something very bad—disgraceful to himself and injurious to those whose names should have been sacred from his gall. Lady Leigh denounced him as a monster of the blackest ingratitude; as a serpent nourished but to sting his benefactors; and then, perhaps, recollecting that her warmth was betraying family secrets, she put him aside as an unprincipled reprobate who scrupled not to prostitute his intellectual gifts to the vilest uses. This strong language was proper to Lady Leigh's lips, but Cyrus had made her his enemy, and the words of an enemy should always be received with a certain reservation.

Nevertheless, I fear there is but little question how the young man lived at this crisis. His old, romantic, chivalrous ideas of honor, truth, and striving, he had quite flung to the winds, and having given up his faith in goodness, he seemed to be endeavoring to realize in his own experience all that was attainable of bad. It was not that he led merely a gay, wild life, for which there are, I am told, living moralists to apologize, but that he kept no measure in his vices—yes, *vices* now. To be weak is often in the end to be wicked. The latent corruption of the once wholesome young heart had come uppermost, and tainted his life through and through.

Robert might have heard a great deal against his brother if he would; but he closed his ears. Evil report commonly

says so much more than is true, that this is affection's safest plan if it would save itself a thousand causeless pangs. Knowing poor Cyr's instability and impetuosity, he could fear enough without having a cruel certainty of detail to start from. And besides he was far off, out of sight, and when we do not *see* we all naturally cling to hoping for the best; courage would fail us, indeed, were it not for the wayside resting-places Hope makes for us upon our life pilgrimage.

What the Nugents said, or thought, or felt, Robert never knew; he was out of their society and listened to no gossip; but when he met Sir Philip in Walton he perceived a change in him; he had a care-worn, dissatisfied air, and was visibly older; his bright little lady looked more like his daughter than his wife. No doubt Sir Philip had his share of mortification, vexation, and pain; no doubt also he deserved it. Who says that our darling sins are our sharpest scourges? Sir Philip could have set his seal to that wise saying as a truth profound.

## V.

There were also other matters claiming Robert Hawthorne's time and thought, which would have effectually prevented his mind from dwelling on uncertain calamities, even had he been so disposed, which he was not. At no time of his life was he a man of wire-drawn feelings. When he suffered, there was always a tangible cause for his suffering—a great grief or bereavement, such as the universal heart acknowledges all the world over; but he never met sorrow half way, or tasted it by anticipation. He had moral muscle, strength, power, durability of mind, not to say hardness; where he loved and where he pitied, his heart was tender as a woman's. Therefore, though an inexpressible disappointment, soreness, and anxiety about Cyrus remained present with him always, he went about his own active duties without pausing for an hour; and this was the more incumbent upon him, that, having been taken into the firm as junior partner when he came of age, the elders left him in a great measure to the management of its affairs. The same practical ability, energy, and persistence, which would have won him distinction in any higher walk of life, made of him an excellent tradesman; and, thanks to the confidence his enterprise inspired, the business had at no time since its com-

mencement been in a more flourishing condition. His uncle Joshua had a natural pride in his success.

Robert was a fine-looking young man with fine prospects, and many Walton Minster families of the same standing as the Hawthornes, especially families in which there were daughters to marry, began to cast on him eyes of favor. Walton was a locality in which people lived sociably together, giving and receiving hospitality as one of the primary duties of existence, and perhaps Robert received rather more than his fair share of invitations. He was a favorite every where, but, with the one-idea'd fidelity which always characterized him, he still persisted in finding most pleasure at Peter Carlton's and old-maid Kibblewhite's. Miss Kibblewhite was a highly privileged person, and I suppose there was scarcely a single young woman in Walton about whom she had not at one time or another rallied Robert, and sometimes he looked as if he did not like it—as if she fretted some delicate sentiment too tender yet to bear the light. Dorothea Sancton was always very silent when her aunt teased Robert, and the color would fly into her face when he appealed to her and said, was it fair to call so many names in question for him? names of girls who must look much higher than himself, he was very certain. Dorothea had her own opinion about that, but she always said it was "too bad," and blushed like a red, red rose. Oh! foolish Dorothea!

These were light matters in comparison with the changes which at this period began to take place in the firm of Hawthorne and Co. Robert for the next year to come had little time for pursuing his own private affairs; these changes taxing him to the utmost, and testing his managing skill very decidedly.

The first of these events, though it would not seem to encroach on business matters, did yet ultimately influence them very greatly indeed. Mrs. Deborah Eliotson had presided over Mr. Joshua Hawthorne and his household so long that when the rapidly developing malady which had already shown its character to most of her friends necessitated her removal from Maiden Lane to a retreat for lunatics, the old gentleman seemed quite lost and helpless, and after a few months' lingering he died quietly one Sunday night in his easy-chair while Robert was reading to him the psalms of the day. He had been very reluctant to let his old favorite

go, but it at last became dangerous to the inmates of the house to keep her there unguarded, and he was prevailed upon to send her away for her own sake. But for months before, her vociferous chattering and laughter kept Robert, who slept in a room over hers, awake half the night through, and her singular appearance in the streets drew after her crowds of boys.

But the proximate cause of her removal was as follows:

George Sancton one morning called Robert to the office window to observe her manœuvres in the bit of blackened court behind the house which was by courtesy called a garden. She was bare-headed, her gray locks streaming in the wind, and on the garden rake was perched her cap. She was running round and round in a circle jabbering and gesticulating furiously; this she kept up for an unaccountable time after you would have thought she must drop from sheer exhaustion; and then, apparently with unabated vigor, she dashed indoors, carrying the tool aloft, and sprang upon the two young men in the office, yelling, "I'll kill, I'll kill, I'll kill!" at the top of her voice. As it happened, there was no one else beside themselves there, and so taken by surprise were they at her sudden entrance that she had the chance of making two or three blows at Robert with the rake over the desk before he could get round and close with her, which was his first impulse. It was not without George Sancton's help that even then she was deprived of her dangerous weapon and pinioned down in a heavy chair; and for long after Robert bore the marks of her teeth upon his cheek and his hands. After that her master said she must go, and she was removed the day after.

At his uncle's death, Robert Hawthorne came into all the property that the old man had left,—three-fourths of the business, all the premises where it was carried on, the two adjoining houses in Maiden Lane, and several others in the Market-place. It was quite a fine inheritance. Old Simon Hawthorne, hale as ever, and leaving a buxom wife at home, came all the way from Chinelyn to see his grandson and attend his brother's funeral—it was the first time Robert and he had met since Mary's death. They parted again with mutual good feeling.

The original head of the firm being gone, Robert Hawthorne took his place; but to this Mr. Reuben Otley seemed very ill inclined to submit, and endeavored to carry matters

with a high hand such as the young man could not approve. Mr. Joshua Hawthorne, it now appeared, had been decidedly the more influential, though much the quieter, partner. To begin with, Mr. Reuben Otley quarreled with Mr. Constant and procured his dismissal, and that accomplished, he returned to his chronic desire for ousting old Tom Aldin, that pertinacious person having maintained his supremacy over the pot up to this date in spite of him. Robert Hawthorne liked Tom, who still did his duty efficiently, and endeavored to support him; but Mr. Reuben Otley made it a point touching his own personal authority, and threatened to withdraw from the firm altogether if he were not permitted to have, as formerly, the loudest voice in its affairs. There seemed, indeed, no chance of peace unless one or the other went, and, of course, Tom must have been the sacrifice; but he saved himself from dismissal by retiring from the firm in a dignified, yet pathetic manner, while in the execution of his duty.

One morning Mr. Reuben Otley's nose was regaled with a scent most acceptable and grateful to his dilated nostrils. "Now, Mr. Robert, is not the varnish burning? Mr. Sanction, just look what Tom is about, will you?" cried he, from his room.

George looked out into the court. The varnish was simmering over, simmering over on the stones, and on one of Tom's poor old crippled feet, but he never stirred. Statue-like, he sat with his unshorn chin on his breast, and his knotty hands grasping his knees, staring at it. There were his pet birds hopping about him as usual.

"Eh! Tom, what are you about?" cried the clerk, sharply.

The next moment he saw. Tom had gone home and taken the wages of his long and faithful servitude from the Great Master's hand.

"Poor old fellow!" said George. "How wroth he would be if he knew he had let his last brew spoil!"

And then the men came and carried him quietly indoors.

Changes, like misfortunes, rarely come singly, and this change was felt by everybody, especially following, as it did, so closely upon Mr. Joshua Hawthorne's loss. It was several months before the firm got another varnish-maker as skilful as old Tom Aldin, and during the interim Robert was instrumental in bringing back that mean young scamp John Otley, whom he found struggling vainly with his bad character to

get decent employment elsewhere. John watched the pot, though he was scarcely fit to be trusted with any thing else; he could not steal varnish without burning his fingers, and as he hated pain he was out of temptation. He had been rescued from the brink of starvation, but Mr. Reuben Otley, at first, professed to be very angry, though he did not attempt to turn the poor wretch off, and he remained, serving the firm in various inferior capacities as long as he lived, and looking up to Robert with a slavish gratitude which was the noblest moral trait he ever showed. After the lapse of a few months, Mr. Constant was restored to his office of head clerk, his substitute being found incompetent, and then all went on with the firm in the regular old way.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

## ONCE IN A LIFETIME.

"MAIDEN with the meek brown eyes,  
In whose orb a shadow lies  
Like the dust in evening skies!

"Standing with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet.

"Like the swell of some sweet tune,  
Morning rises into noon,  
May glides onward into June.

"Gather then each flower that grows,  
Where the young heart overflows."  
LONGFELLOW.

## I.

THE house in Maiden Lane was very dull now that Robert Hawthorne had it to himself; duller and dimmer than it had ever been since it was a house, perhaps. He used to say sometimes, when he dropped into the little tea-shop in the Market-place for a five minutes' chat with Miss Kibblewhite and her niece Dorothea, that he was almost afraid of staying in it by himself of nights.

"You should take a wife," cried old-maid Kibblewhite, briskly; "it is not good for man to be alone—we have high authority for saying that, haven't we?"

Robert, blushing, met Dorothea's pleasant eyes, which drooped before his instantly.

Dorothea, Dorothea! go back to thy embroidery frame; to thy dog-gess Prim and her puppies in the corner; Robert Hawthorne will live and die a bachelor unless he can win one certain white flower to wear in his breast whose perfume is the only perfume in which his soul delights.

You remember the gathering of posies in Lady Leigh's garden two years ago, when Robert Hawthorne first experienced that curious confusion of speech which sometimes

befalls a man in the presence of a perfectly harmless young woman? It was Lilian Carlton who was gathering the posies—Lilian Carlton and little Lola, who had been sent out to play after a naughty fit. Also, perhaps you may remember the nutcracking at St. Wilfred's fair, and the musical evenings in the organist's house? Since then Lilian had sprung up to early womanhood, and at intervals, Robert Hawthorne had seen her often—seen her in a misty visionary fashion; sometimes as an angelic being to be gazed on from afar off, and admired humbly, worshipfully; sometimes as a dainty, bright lady, high exalted out of his reach; but at last, a tenderer light had dissipated the glamour of strangeness and divinity that surrounded her, and he saw her as the one sweet maiden to be loved by his man's heart. It had been slow growing, this first and only passion that Robert Hawthorne ever felt, and it was deep-rooted. Its fibres had knitted themselves into every niche of his being, and in imagination he saw its blossoms crowning his life with a beauty such as only Love reveals to youth.

And Lilian! Lilian never knew since when it was that Robert's step a long way off echoed in her heart, or the rose of her face deepened under his gaze as the rose of the garden deepens in the sunshine. But one day her eyes were opened, and a revelation came to her. Since then she had been rather shy of Robert, and when their hands met she blushed and trembled and drew back, and Robert, seeming to catch this infectious shyness, became more reverent of her than ever. Twenty times and more he was on the point of speaking, when some reserve or shrinking on Lilian's part, though he lacked not courage in common matters, checked his ardor. Like Captain Miles Standish, of puritanic New England memory, he was more afraid of a "thundering 'No' point-blank from the mouth of a woman," than any other catastrophe that could happen to him—not that he need have feared a thundering "No" from Lilian, for, in spite of her timidity, her secret preference betrayed itself over and over again. On the whole they were very happy. He could gather the blush roses whenever they met, and wear them as a fragrant posy in his memory, and no doubt but she had some sweet word to dream over and caress in his absence—for each knew the other's love as surely as if it had been sworn a thousand times.

This was why Robert Hawthorne blushed at meeting



Dorothea Sancton's pleasant glance. He thought she had his secret. But Dorothea had nobody's secret except her own.

## II.

"Lilian, who came with you to the garden door to-night? was it your father?" Lady Leigh asked, looking suspiciously at her *protégée* from under her knitted brows.

"No, madam," replied Lilian, with a traitorous blush.

Little Lola, demurely at work near the darkening window, turned her black eyes that way and listened.

"Who was it, then?" Lilian apparently had some disinclination to utter the name, for she hesitated, so Lady Leigh spoke it for her. "Was it Mr. Robert Hawthorne?"

"Yes, madam."

Lilian thought she was going to escape further question, for Lady Leigh, observing Lola on the watch, sent her to bed, and then went on with her lamb's-wool knitting in silence for a long while. Lilian also got to her twilight work, and sat down in the seat by the window that Lola had vacated. She and her patroness spent very many of these quiet evenings now. Lilian sometimes thought, if she had to go on spending such evenings until she was as old as Mistress Alice Johnes! Lady Leigh seemed to forget for half an hour or more that she was not alone; it was then nearly dark, and Sempronius brought in the little iron basket of bright fire which was set upon the hearth in the drawing-room every night all the summer through, by way of being cheerful. His entrance and the bustle he made in closing the curtains, stirred her out of her reverie; and, peering round in search of her companion, she espied her in her distant nook with her hands down-dropped upon her knees, and her gaze resting abstractedly on the rich folds of drapery which Sempronius had just drawn over the external gloom. Lilian had been much given to these pensive fits of absence latterly. Lady Leigh was very observant of her for several minutes, during which her attitude never changed; but, at last, as if her gaze were drawn round magnetically by that other gaze watching her, she turned her head, and their eyes met.

"Come nearer to me, Lilian; I want to have some conversation with you," said Lady Leigh, austere, and Lilian

approached trembling; she suspected what was coming in instinctively, and dreaded it. "I have been very good to you, child, have I not? You owe every thing to me that you are; I have fed, clothed, taught, and loved you, ever since you were no higher than my hand—is it not so?" The catalogue of benefits was precise.

"Oh, yes, madam! you have been my benefactress; you have been very kind indeed to me!" cried Lilian, warmly.

"And what return can you make me, what return *will* you make me, for all I have been and done for you?"

Lilian seemed puzzled.

"Madam, you have all my gratitude," said she, hesitatingly.

"But I shall not be satisfied with a mere barren gratitude," replied Lady Leigh, with great impatience; "gratitude is only words—affection diluted into words; it costs the giver nothing, and is worth nothing to the receiver. I have had gratitude enough—from you I am prepared to expect something more—perhaps a sacrifice."

Lilian's heart began to beat very fast, but she never spoke; with her eyes fixed on her patroness she waited.

"Perhaps a sacrifice," Lady Leigh repeated. "You are not to deceive me, Lilian. Has that young man who brought you home to-night ever talked any love nonsense to you?"

"No, madam," answered Lilian, rather proudly, but blushing nevertheless.

"There is only a silent understanding between you? You need not reply. I perceive all you could *not* tell me; I am an old woman, and have seen into deeper things than young girls' love secrets."

"Madam, you are mistaken; I have no love secrets," said Lilian, in eager haste and confusion.

"Dear child, do not be at the pains to tell me any white lies. I know both what you have and what you have not. And as the young man has not been trying to delude your imagination through your ears *yet*, you must give him no more opportunities, and if he seek them you must discourage him."

Lilian's head drooped, and there was a strange mist and dimness between her eyes and the fire.

"I know where the end would be if you did not," Lady Leigh continued; "you would by and bye begin to fancy that there were only you two in the world, and you would

cry to be married. There would be dismal scenes, such as I witnessed a little while ago, because I should *not* give you up. I have trained you to be just what I like about me, and I shall retain you near me as long as I live, in spite of everybody and everything."

Lilian's heart gave a great bound, and then went on palpitating and fluttering, like a poor little bird that its captor holds by one wing while it struggles wildly to escape. Lady Leigh was quite conscious of the effort, but she did not relax her gripe, and the young damsel's pretty white feathers of hope and innocent happiness were shaken all over the ground.

"You know the time at which Mr. Robert Hawthorne usually visits your father, and you must avoid going at the same hour. It is the easiest thing in the world if you give your mind to it, and it is your *duty*. I hope you see that it is your *duty*, Lilian?"

"No, madam."

This was so like the demurely, willful little answers Lilian used to make to her patroness when she was a child, that it quite put Lady Leigh into a passion.

"Not see that it is your duty! then you ought to see," she exclaimed. "But, at all events, you can see that it is immodest—yes, *immodest*—to encourage any young man's assiduities before he has sought the approval of your natural guardians."

"Oh! madam, my father, madam! Robert Hawthorne,—indeed, believe me, I have not—" Poor Lilian thought, no doubt, that she was going to make a very telling defence, but after these three spasmodic attempts she gave it up, and the outraged young heart asserted itself in a shower of tears. Lady Leigh was rather grieved to see her cry; she had not intended to sting quite so deeply, but the wound was given and Lilian remembered it.

"I do not suppose for a moment that any young woman, brought up as you have been, Lilian, would persist in doing what was wrong after she was made aware of it," said she, more kindly; "and now that you know what is right, I am sure you will do it. You do not know the construction people put upon simple things in Mr. Robert Hawthorne's station in life: the moment two young folks begin to walk about together they are going to be married, nothing less; and if the event does not take place, the girl is talked of to her

disadvantage. Mr. Robert Hawthorne, from your own admission, has not declared himself to you; you are not aware of his having spoken to your father, and I can certify that he has not addressed himself to me. I am not sure that he means any thing more than his temporary amusement. There is nothing like the pride of these well-to-do shopkeepers; they all like to marry money-bags, and Mr. Robert Hawthorne must be aware that if you offend me I shall not give you sixpence."

Lilian's eyes were quite dry now; she held up her head and looked straight into the fire, while a crimson spot burnt hotly on either cheek. Lady Leigh supposed that she had crushed utterly any young germ of loving sentiment that might have begun to pulsate in her *protégée's* heart, and applied herself again to her knitting with staid satisfaction; but while she knitted she glanced at her furtively from time to time, and perceived more than once a glittering moisture in her fawnlike eyes and a hard sob swelling in her throat. She tried to feel angry with Lilian because she was vexed at herself for having hurt her with that one cruel causeless word, and at last she told her abruptly to kiss her and go to bed. Lilian put by her work, and went trembling to administer the evening embrace; Lady Leigh took her by the hand and detained her.

"Child, you are not to think me hard; I am getting a very old woman, and shall not need you long," said she, with pathetic selfishness. "I know more about these little trials than you will ever do; they pass, and all goes on as if they had never happened. When I am in my grave, you will be sorry you ever grieved me."

This little speech touched the tender core of Lilian's heart, and sent her sobbing to her room. Lola, who shared it with her, was sitting up in her bed wide awake when she entered, but immediately cowered down amongst the clothes and hid her eyes. The child had most precocious ideas on many things.

When Lilian's face had been lying by hers on the pillow for a few minutes—Lilian softly weeping all the while—Lola stole one of her caressing hands round her neck and whispered mischievously, "Lilian, I'll tell you something—I read it in a book. It said, 'After the showers fall the flowers grow;'" and Lilian could not help laughing in the midst of her tears, at the significance the little sprite threw into the words.

But tell us, Lola, how about the flowers, if they had received notice that the sun was never, never, *never* to shine any more?

### III.

Peter Carlton missed Lilian from the Minster the following afternoon, and went home to his tea after the service was over quite disappointed. When Lady Leigh's household was at Walton, he always expected to see his daughter come up into the organ-loft at evening prayers and afterward return with him for an hour or two to his house; and if the habit was broken through he suspected something was amiss, and sent Tibbie to inquire. Tibbie went, as usual, and brought back word that Lady Leigh had company, and Lilian could not be spared; which was a mere excuse, for Lady Leigh's company was only her sister, and, in fact, Lilian spent the long summer evening in the garden with Lola and a book.

Robert Hawthorne was now so constant in his visits to the organist that when he opened the parlor door and came in, though Peter never looked round from his music, he knew who it must be, and said with a simplicity that spoke clearly of his prescience, "Lilian is not coming to-night. Lady Leigh has company, and she cannot be spared."

"I suppose so," replied Robert. "The garden door on the Minster Hill was open, and I saw her as I came by."

The old man and the young one had not so cheerful an evening as common; their talk often flagged, and sometimes ceased altogether. Not that Lilian was a chatterer, but she was a link in the discourse which both missed when she was absent. They broached many subjects, but all proved deficient in interest. Robert kept wondering and wondering what something meant. Lilian had seen him pass the garden door, and had turned her head quickly away without any acknowledgment—she had just blushed and turned quickly away. He did not think she seemed angry, or offended, or grieved—no, if he could interpret her look at all, she was *ashamed*. But of what? Robert could not for the life of him conceive.

He went home quite early, restless and anxious, but the next evening found him at Peter Carlton's again. Glancing round the room as he entered, he perceived that Lilian was

not there, and that there were no signs of expecting her either.

"We shall not have Lilian any more in the evenings," the organist immediately began to explain. "Lady Leigh needs her, she says. I had her a little while in the morning instead. She must always come in the morning, she tells me."

Now Robert Hawthorne, as men of business should be, was always very much occupied in the morning—a circumstance of which Lilian was, no doubt, perfectly well aware; so that, as her patroness had told her, there was nothing easier than to avoid him, if she gave her mind to it; and she did give her mind to it so effectually that for nearly a week she and Robert never saw each other. Then came Sunday with both of them at Minster service, and though Robert's errant glance went wandering again and again to the stall where Lilian sat under Lady Leigh's wing, he could not catch her eyes once lifted from her book. Lilian had not *always* been so devotional; but her maiden pride and modesty had taken the alarm, and entrenched her round about with a stately reserve. Robert made himself very unhappy; he was startled out of his security, and began to fear a thousand things—that she had discovered his passion, and was bent on checking its avowal; that she despised his position in life or himself; or that he had unwittingly offended her. A little while ago and he could have been sure she liked him, and she was not cold-hearted enough to show him such a chilling countenance unless there were some weighty reason for it. He tried to sound Peter, but Peter's wits were generally in the clouds, and without a point-blank question such as Robert could not ask, no explanation was to be obtained from him. Dorothea Sancton was equally impracticable—she did not see much of Lilian Carlton now, she told Robert; she thought she must have forgotten her way to the old tea-shop in the Market-place, for she scarcely came there once a month.

#### IV.

While Lilian was thus grieving those who loved her, she was truly miserable herself. No consciousness of doing her duty very hard indeed, no sense of properly asserted dignity, could make her happy. She needed kindness, affection, ca-

resses, and pined without them. Lola used to pat her cheeks and coax her not to look so solemn, but if she brightened for a minute or two, the cloud always dropped down over her face as soon as she was let alone. Lady Leigh was quite in a pet with her, and lectured her ten times a day.

Curious moral lectures were my Lady Leigh's! I wish I could epitomize one of them worthily for your benefit. She started from the novel idea that in matters of love and marriage a universal delusion prevailed. People fancied themselves in love, and immediately it occurred to them that they *must* marry. Must! there was no *must* in the case. There were a thousand things to be considered before *love*, which was a mere abstract idea! There were worldly position, family, means of bringing up probable children, suitability of education, and mutual connections of an available kind. For her part she thought that in the conjugal relation *love*—as silly young fools call it—love could be more readily dispensed with than any of these. Lady Leigh, indeed, appeared to view the matter as a middle-aged bachelor, living in chambers, and looked after by a laundress, might do—a bachelor ignorant of family ties, and hating and despising them as Reynard despised the grapes. She had not, perhaps, been very happy in her own married life; but in fairness she ought to have told Lilian that she had started in it with all the requisites specified by herself; perhaps it had proved a failure through lacking that one thing needful which the silly young things who are caught by it make of so much account—through lack of love.

Lilian derived no benefit from the sage counsels lavished upon her, and her beautiful face, to use Lola's expression, grew longer and longer every day she lived. She began to entertain some of those very pathetic ideas about herself which will visit young maidens when the course of their true love does not run smooth, and to fancy all the sorrows in existence heaped upon her own innocent head.

There was a statuary's workshop abutting on a corner of the churchyard which she had to pass in going to her father's, where people who wanted monuments for their deceased friends went to choose the design. The statuary was a merry little old man, who always whistled as he chipped, and had a store of queer, *grave* anecdotes for his gossips—and his gossips were many, for everybody who took the short cut across the churchyard was obliged to pass his corner.

Lilian often stopped to speak to him, and one sunshiny morning during this tragical period she paused and looked in; seeing him at his work and alone.

"A fine morning, Miss Lilian; what think you of this idea? I call it a very sweet idea, indeed!" cried he briskly, nodding at her and pointing to the piece of pure white marble, on which he was laboring. Lilian approached nearer and saw a lily, broken from the stem, sculptured on the top. "What should you say to such a stone as this for yourself, now?" asked the statuary, with his head on one side, and his sharp little eyes turned up to her face. "It is the neatest thing I ever set my chisel to."

"For whom is it, John?"

"It is for that daughter of Dean Mauleverer, Rose Mary Mauleverer. I've got the inscription in my pocket-book now," taking it out and reading off in a solemn singsong: "In memory of Rose Mary, youngest daughter of William Mauleverer, D.D., Dean of Walton Minster, who died April 27, 1822, aged nineteen years. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" "Now you would say that was in a real pious spirit, wouldn't you, miss?" asked he, sinking his voice confidentially; "but I'll tell you what it seems to me—it seems a laying of our own hardness to the Lord's account—that's what it seems to me. The old man's sorry *now*, but he should have let her have her way—no good ever comes of crossing young folk's fancies. You will have heard the story, I dare say, miss?"

Yes, Lilian had heard; in fact, Lady Leigh had quoted it to her as an instance of the headstrong folly of a girl in love; she would rather *die* than profess to give up the curate, whom the dean disapproved—the curate who, thirty years after she was in her grave, came to the dignity of bishop! But how could the dean foresee that? The curate had only scholarship and fine personal qualities, no money, no family connections to push him, no rank, no anything but himself—and a dean's daughter must marry something more than a man!

"I've seen her," said old John, touching the flower delicately with his hand; "I've seen her many a time standing just where you are standing now, as bright and pretty a little girl as there was in all the town. She was a bit of a favorite of mine—I have my favorites like other folks, Miss



Lilian—and her it did me good to see. Then sometimes Mr. Wilson would come along and speak to her here; he could see her from his window at his lodgings by your father's when she stood at my door, and it is my belief he made an errand out on purpose often—bless you, *I know*."

"It is a pretty design, John," said Lilian, abstractedly; "who chose it?"

"The strange thing, miss! she chose it herself. She was talking here to me one evening last summer, and says she, 'John, did you ever carve a broken lily on a young girl's tombstone?' and says I, 'No.' 'Then do the first time you have such a commission. I saw one on a monument abroad, and I thought it a beautiful fancy—I thought it a beautiful fancy,' says she. And so when the dean came to choose her a stone, I told him what she had said; and he nodded to me to carry it out."

While Lilian and John were talking within the workshop, there had approached unperceived a young clergyman, with a crape round his hat a fine-looking young gentleman, serious, but self-possessed in manner, as most men are who early have to conquer themselves, and wage a fight with grievous loss against the world. He stopped at the doorway so that Lilian could not pass out until he moved on, and she was compelled to hear what he said.

He spoke in a very tranquil voice—death is such a stiller of the anger sorrowful hearts can cherish when the partner of their suffering lives—but when they are *gone*, anger is like blasphemy, it profanes their heavenly idea; so, though a little while ago his soul burnt and throbbed with stormy passion, a great calm had fallen upon it now, and he could stand by old John's shop-door and watch him at work on his lost love's monument without any outward expression of his grief.

"You are getting on, John; when will it be done?" he asked.

"By the end of the week, sir; before Sunday it will be up."

"Where is it to be placed?"

"It will be placed, sir, below her mother's. You know the spot?"

"Yes."

Mr. Wilson remained two or three minutes longer watching the careful hand of the sculptor, and then went forward;

went somewhere amongst the poor and desolate, and in alleviating the sorrows of others, lightened, we are sure, his own. Lilian could not help observing the sad, wistful expression of his eyes—an expression which, it is said, he has never lost. There is not much romance to the irreverent modern imagination in a bishop, wigged and aproned and lawn-sleeved—perhaps there is not much romance about sixty years old at all—but to reach that venerable age and station a man must have been young and at least one year a curate, which would give him opportunities of tasting common joys and common sorrows as fully as him who never attains to more than a poor vicarage from about which the odor of romance has not yet departed. I dare say all the bishops on the bench, even the most solid of them, have a love story for one of the earliest chapters in their respective memoirs, the study of which might be extremely profitable to the world at large, and to ambitious but short-sighted parents in particular. Yes; Mr. Curate Wilson presides over a rather turbulent diocese now, and pretty little Rose Mary Mauleverer, for whom he was not great man enough thirty years ago, lies in her forgotten grave, a hundred and fifty miles away from the fine episcopal palace where she might have been reigning in serene majesty, a fair and fitting wife for a devout and energetic bishop.

But when Lilian saw her monument in progress, and Mr. Wilson sadly watching the broken flower growing out of the stone, all the world in my story was young; and according to Lady Leigh, the chief part of it was foolish. Lilian was very foolish, for she went away from the statuary's workshop with tears in her eyes, thinking if John were carrying that marble for *her*, and Robert Hawthorne were to come along some sunshiny morning and see it—what would he feel?

## V.

Robert Hawthorne would doubtless have felt very sad and regretful and desolate, as the bereaved curate did, but, like him, he would have braced up his strength and gone on with his day's work until it was done, and the call came for him to rest from his labors. He had not, however, this bitter trial to encounter, and nobody in Maiden Lane had reason to suspect that any thing was going wrong with the young

master—least of all so momentous an affair as his first love! But with Lilian it was different; she grew wan and listless; and moved about the house, a silent reproach to Lady Leigh, until Lady Nugent, who had a womanly eye for tender distresses, found her out and undertook her cause.

"Augusta, do you know what Lilian is fretting about?" she asked, with a serious air.

"Some nonsense, of course. What do young girls always fret about?" was the rather disingenuous reply.

"Their lovers, you mean. Well, poor things, let them have their little romance—we had ours once upon a time."

"You always were silly on these subjects, and I suppose you will be silly to the end of the chapter, Helena; but you are mistaken as to Lilian—she has no declared lover. I am only keeping her out of somebody's way, on the principle that prevention is better than cure."

"That somebody is Robert Hawthorne—but why keep her out of his way? It would be a very fit match for her."

"I do not wish her to be a fit match for anybody. I want to keep her to myself."

"Then you are very selfish, Augusta! yes, I must say so—very selfish, indeed; Lilian is not like Phyllis—she will break her heart."

"Break her heart! sentimental nonsense! She scarcely knows she has a heart."

"Then she is finding it out."

Lady Leigh looked extremely impatient of her sister's argument because she was predetermined not to be convinced.

"You plead very pathetically, Helena, but they are too young to marry even if there were no other objection," said she harshly. "Robert Hawthorne is but twenty-three, and Lilian is only seventeen."

"I was younger than Lilian when I married Philip's father," persisted Lady Nugent.

"Early marriages were the fashion then, and very foolish things they were. But it is in vain to argue. I do not mean to give Lilian to Robert Hawthorne or any one else, and I have brought her up too well to fear that she will act contrary to my wishes. If Cyrus had turned out better, I intended her for him, but as he disappointed me I shall keep her to myself. I think we have had experience enough of those Hawthornes."

"That is unjust, Augusta—Robert is in nowise to blame

for his brother's faults; I am sure you would find nothing against him seek it where you would; and in separating Lilian from him you more than overstep the authority of even a parent. I feel myself that a girl's natural vocation is in a happy marriage, and on no pretence would I charge myself with the responsibility of preventing one. What would become of Lilian left in the world alone without her father or yourself? It is cruel, unkind, to expose her to such a chance."

Lady Leigh submitted to the rebuke silently, and indemnified herself by an internal comment on her sister's soft-hearted folly.

She, however, soon began to perceive that, if she would do her mischief effectually, she must remove Lilian for a season from the contemplation of what was affecting her spirits and give her change. When she returned to Walton this last time, she had told Lilian that in all likelihood she should never again leave it except for a brief visit to Hadley Royal, for age was telling upon her strength, and the fatigue of long journeys was too severe a tax for her years. Great then was Lilian's surprise and great her disappointment, when she one morning heard her patroness telling Dr. Sandford that she had taken it into her head that she should like to go abroad. Sir Philip and his wife were going and the Lowthers also, and they would be such a pleasant little *côterie* in Paris for the winter that she should like to join them. Dr. Sandford was too discreet to gainsay her wishes; he did not see any reason why her ladyship should not travel, providing she set out before the season was too far advanced; and Mistress Hilton, received her directions forthwith to prepare for a prolonged absence from home.

Poor Lilian spent the night on which she heard this decision in tears. She was not deceived; she knew this journey was to be undertaken on nobody's account but her own, and she thought, Oh, she would rather have promised Lady Leigh any thing than that she should have been taken away from Walton Minster just then. She felt and looked most deplorable, and when she told her father of the sudden arrangement, he plucked up a tardy spirit and declared she should not go abroad at all—she should stay at home with him. Then Lilian grew alarmed, terrified, for what Lady Leigh might say about Robert if her anger were excited, and for a little while she had a shrinking miserable dread of hearing him allude to the journey at all. But Peter Carlton

was easily pacified; his daughter's word was law to him, and when she begged him not to interfere with her patroness's rule over her, he obeyed her; he remembered that she was young, and might like the strange scenes and company abroad better than Walton Minster, which was dull at the best of times; though her good little heart ached at the thought of how lonely he would be without her through all the long winter; and then he tried to cheer her by an assurance that Robert Hawthorne's company was always a pleasure to him, and since the young man had nobody at home to claim him, no doubt, he should have more of it than ever.

Throughout all the trouble of preparation for the journey, Lady Leigh contrived to wear a most aggrieved expression of countenance, and to treat Lilian with peculiar harshness and coldness. She reflected that, at her time of life, it was very hard to have to travel five or six hundred miles for the sake of separating a pair of lovers; and, as is only fair and just, her self-created annoyance aggravated her ten times more than any vexation coming from without could have done; aggravated her so intensely, that, meeting Robert Hawthorne one day upon the Minster Hill, she gave him one of her darkest and haughtiest looks, but declined to acknowledge his respectful salutation altogether. Perhaps nothing could, at the moment, have delighted Robert more, unless it had been a beaming recognition from Lilian herself.

"It is not Lilian's fault that she keeps out of my way," said he to himself; "Lady Leigh has taken a dislike to me, and I only know of one cause there can be for that."

In a rather exalted frame of mind he continued his walk to the Market-place; until, coming round the corner by old-maid Kibblewhite's shop, he encountered Lilian herself, just issuing from the door. She retreated within, blushing, startled, and confused. It was a tell-tale retreat. Robert Hawthorne saw the blush and the glance suddenly withdrawn, and without stopping to reason upon them, he followed her, with a cheek as crimson as her own. There was no further flight for Lilian, and therefore she was compelled to stand her ground, and reply to Robert's not very brilliant remarks as well as she could; but she looked so distressed and trembled so visibly from head to foot, that when she moved to pass out again, he let her go for very pity. He could not but see that his appearance was the cause of her

confusion, and if they had been alone he would certainly have found courage to ask the reason why. He stood for a few minutes absent and meditative, a mark for old-maid Kibblewhite's inquisitive eyes, and then walked out of the little shop without the preparatory civility of saying good morning.

"But I can excuse him," observed she to her niece, "for I saw what was the matter, Dorothea; I always thought Lilian Carlton and Robert Hawthorne made sweet eyes at each other, but now I am sure of it. And a pretty couple they are too!"

"Lilian has never said a word to me, aunt," replied Dorothea, abruptly.

If Dorothea's temper was rather short that day, and she did not see things in quite so cheerful a light as usual, there was, perhaps, a sorrowful cause for it, and we will pity rather than blame her, if you please.

## VI.

About this time it became observable that Robert Hawthorne took upon himself much more than his usual share of the out-of-door business of the firm; that he found a great many times a day a necessity for traversing the Minster yard, and that to whatever part of the town he might ultimately be going he invariably contrived to introduce that into his rounds. His out-goings and in-comings became so extremely capricious that nobody except George Sancton ever knew when he was in the office or out of it; George being always deputed to answer for Robert in his absence. Of course this extraordinary waste of time must have had an object, and its object the sagacious reader has already divined, namely, to waylay Lilian on her visits to her father. But whether Lilian, from the upper window of that little chamber where she slept, always looked out to see whether the coast was clear before she ventured abroad, or whether malicious fate fought against them, I cannot say, but certain it is that for nearly a fortnight Robert's sorties and meanderings were without result, and the time for Lilian's banishment was close at hand. In this extremity, and fortified by the ancient maxim, "That faint heart never won fair lady," Robert took the desperate course of going to Peter Carlton's

directly after breakfast, firmly resolving there to stay until Lilian appeared. His anxiety had begun to undermine his appetite and trouble his natural rest in an unprecedented manner, and the young fellow, for his part, saw no sufficient reason why it should not be put an end to. Peter Carlton had ceased to be surprised at his irregular irruptions, and gave him his customary negligent welcome. But Robert had a question for his ear that morning, and begged him to leave his music a little while and attend to him.

"Peter, have you never suspected what brought me here so much lately?" said he, by way of breaking the ice.

"Why, Robert, I may have thought Lilian had something to do with it now and again," was the reply.

"Yes, Peter; it is Lilian. If she does not say me nay, have I your leave to take her for my wife?"

"Yes, Robert Hawthorne, and welcome—to nobody so gladly would I give her."

"Thank you, Peter; then, if you please, I'll wait here until she comes."

There were no heroics between the lover and the father, but they shook hands and were very cheerful. Peter looked almost happy; he was not a selfish man, and he knew he was committing his child to safe and kind hands.

"I want to try this anthem over on the Minster organ," said he, by and bye, taking up the piece he had laid down on Robert's entrance; "so I'll leave you to yourself. There's a book to amuse you till Lily comes; it may be an hour or two, for she is very uncertain now."

It was not much of the book that Robert read. He ensconced himself in a corner of the window with the curtain quite hiding him from the outside, and watched the little gate near the sculptor's corner until the morning was half spent. The hours were very long indeed. Then came the few Minster folk, and Robert, through the open doors, could hear the magnificent roll of the organ in the psalms. About ten minutes before prayers were over his watch was rewarded; Lilian came quickly into the churchyard, and at a pace that was almost a run traversed the path, glancing hurriedly toward the town as she neared the door. He could scarcely forbear a smile at the thought of the tremulous haste with which she was rushing toward what she appeared most to wish to avoid. As soon as she was in the house, however, she took breath, and Robert heard her foot creep-

ing from step to step wearily as she mounted the stairs. He stood facing the door, and as Lilian slowly opened it and entered he saw her uneasy start and blush, and her look behind as if she were going to run away.

"Where is my father?" said she, nervously, as he drew her gently into the room.

"He is gone to the Minster. Oh, Lilian!" replied Robert, reproachfully, and he bent his eyes on her face, while she glanced up at him hurriedly and then burst into tears.

What could Robert do? He could only caress her, and soothe her, and comfort her, and say all manner of wild, incoherent, passionate, loving things; and, when Lilian wept on, he could only draw her pretty head upon his breast, and kiss away her tears, which tenderness made the flood for a time the more violent. When it was over, there was a wonderful change for the brighter in her face: you have seen how April laughs out in sunshine after one of her stormiest showers? That was Lilian.

"How foolish I am," said she, quite ashamed; she had not been half conscious of Robert's words and caresses, though their effect was felt in the lifting away of the weight which had been pressing her to the earth for weeks past.

"I have been so unhappy, Lilian," Robert said, determined to make capital out of his previous sufferings.

"And so have I, Robert, but it was not *my* fault," replied she; then a warm blush came up over her face, and, clasping her hands in laughing alarm, she cried, "Oh, Robert! Lady Leigh!"

"I am not much afraid of her now," was the lover's reply.

"But I am—and my father?" said Lilian.

"Your father is on our side."

"How must I tell Lady Leigh? She will think me ungrateful and wicked—oh Robert!"

"I will tell her myself—or your father shall."

"No—you," said Lilian; which little expression of confidence and the look that accompanied it charmed Robert into more lover-like speeches than it would be reasonable to quote.

Peter Carlton did not hurry home from Minster, and when he returned at last he found Lilian gone and Robert waiting for him.

"Well, have you got it over?" asked he.

"Yes; and now for Lady Leigh. I shall brave her this afternoon."



I suppose Robert could have braved an army of Lady Leighs in such a cause, but Peter said he was thankful the onerous mission was taken off *his* shoulders.

## VII.

Lilian Carlton had always a tell-tale face, and her genuine alarm for what was to come could not veil her inexpressible joy in what was past. "I know something has happened," whispered that precocious little Lola; "and I wouldn't be you!" but Lilian only smiled and tried to feel very courageous, until the necessity of going into the dining-room to luncheon brought her in contact with her benefactress. Lady Nugent was there that day, and also Mistress Alice Johnes, for which Lilian felt very thankful, but their presence did not save her from Lady Leigh's keen scrutiny.

"Where have you been this morning. Lilian?" asked she, with suspicious acuteness.

"Only to my father's," replied poor Lilian, with the hottest blush suffusing face and neck and hands even.

"What have you been crying about?" There was no answer: Lady Nugent kindly fixed her attention on her plate, and little Lola chuckled with delight. Mistress Alice Johnes saw that Lilian was likely to begin to cry again and good-naturedly poured her out some wine, observing that she thought a tonic would benefit her immensely.

"A tonic!" sneered Lady Leigh contemptuously. "Rub-bish! She has had *tonic* enough this morning to last her for a long while, it seems to me."

It sounded such a whimsical way of putting it that Lady Nugent, who suspected the truth, could not forbear a smile, and Lilian's blush-roses bloomed again most beautifully. Lady Leigh was in a very bad temper all through luncheon, and as soon as it was over she clutched her gold-headed stick, and, frowning ominously, bade Lilian follow her to her morning room. With quaking heart the poor child obeyed, casting a pleading glance at Lady Nugent as she went;—Lola made a perfect pantomime of defiant gestures to encourage her in the coming contest, but Lilian was hardly in a frame of mind to profit by them. Sempronius was crossing the hall from the morning room just as they appeared, and he intimated respectfully that Mr. Robert

Hawthorne requested an interview with her ladyship. Lady Leigh turned half round to say, "How *dare* you, Lilian!" but Lilian was already flitting up stairs to her room, where she locked herself in to wait with tears the issue of her lover's mission.

When Lady Leigh marched through the open doorway into the morning room and Sempronius softly closed it behind her, she was wearing her most haughtily dignified and repellant aspect—an aspect that would have effectually daunted a weak or timid person; but Robert Hawthorne was quite capable of holding his own even with such an antagonist as Lady Leigh. He was standing by the window when she appeared, and, though she immediately enthroned herself in her great chair, she left him in the same attitude.

"To what circumstance am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" asked she, sarcastically, feigning total ignorance, and resolved to make Robert's task as difficult to him as ever she could.

Robert smiled irrepressibly—he was so very happy!

"I think your ladyship already knows," said he.

Lady Leigh reddened and answered, coldly, "I wait your explanation;" and fixed her great eyes on his face.

"Peter Carlton has consented to give me his daughter, and I have been happy enough to win her favor too—and we all wish that your ladyship should leave her behind with us when you go abroad;" said Robert, with a downright simplicity that would not see the probability of denial; but he colored ingenuously as he spoke.

"You wish to marry Lilian Carlton—if I understand you aright? and she has accepted your suit?"

"Yes."

"Then, sir, the sooner the better, for that cold-hearted, ungrateful, deceptive girl shall not pass another night under my roof! I told her my wishes some time since, and common affection bound her to consider them. She has not done so, and I throw her off. She is unworthy of all I have done for her!"

Robert tried to speak in Lilian's exculpation, but Lady Leigh would not hear another word, and, wishing him a very good day, she returned to the drawing-room, bidding Sempronius show Mr. Hawthorne out. But Robert was ill-inclined to go with such a conclusion to his mission, and told

the servant to ask Lilian to see him, but Sempronius shook his head, and replied that he dare not for all his place was worth. While Robert was lingering discomfited, Lady Nugent appeared, and spoke to him with great kindness. She told him that her sister was grievously disappointed and annoyed, but that she hoped to prevail upon her to rescind her resolution, and if she were impracticable she promised to take Lilian home with her; but in the meantime he must go quietly away, and prepare Peter Carlton for the possible consequences of her displeasure.

Lilian from her window saw Robert go down the garden steps and across the churchyard to her father's door, and her heart throbbed with tremulous expectation and dread of her patroness's appearance; but she did not come. The first interruption was from Mistress Hilton, who demanded entrance with a message from Lady Leigh, and before she had delivered herself of it in sprang little Lola.

"Oh! I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry you are going, Lilian!" cried she, flinging her arms round her neck; "but you will be happier, I know—only what is to become of me? I shall cry myself to death."

Lilian looked bewildered.

"Yes, Miss Lilian, my lady says you are to go to-day. My Lady Nugent cannot get her to alter her word," Hilton explained.

"But why? Oh! no, no! I cannot leave her when she is displeased with me; I will beg her to let me stay;" and full of excitement, her tender heart overflowing with repentance toward her benefactress, Lilian ran down stairs and burst into the drawing-room, exclaiming, "Oh! Lady Leigh, do not, do not send me away in anger. I cannot bear to leave you so."

Lady Leigh had not quite prepared herself for this, but she was still fuming in wrath, and she replied, "You do not love me, Lilian, therefore leave acting; what do you want more than to go to this lover of yours as soon as he will have you? You have been too selfish and ungrateful for me to wish to keep you, and you are to go to-day."

"Give her a little respite, Augusta—you are unjust to the child," pleaded Lady Nugent.

"No; I will not be deceived any more—I have done with her!" was the reply, and Lady Leigh snatched her dress out of Lilian's hand and left the room. Poor Lilian, weeping

bitterly, hid her face upon the couch, which shook with her sobs; Lady Nugent heard her lamenting for her mother.

"My dear love," said she, taking her in her arms as tenderly as if she were a child of her own, "Robert Hawthorne will make up to you for all of us. You must not cry so; you have chosen wisely, and Lady Leigh will forgive you by and bye. Mistress Alice Johnes and I will take you home with us now, and perhaps we shall see Robert in the evening." Lilian tried to control her grief, but she had one of the most affectionate hearts in the world, and the thought that she had displeased her benefactress dimmed her happiness more than any one imagined. It was a difficult task to prevail upon her to quit the house at all, but when Lady Nugent made her understand that she could only still more deeply irritate Lady Leigh by resisting her commands, she went, though not before she had again pathetically supplicated for pardon at her benefactress's closed door, and been again repulsed with hard words and accusations. Perhaps, on the whole, it was quite as well that she should go. The chance of Lady Leigh's repenting when she missed her young companion would be so much the greater.

## VIII.

Peter Carlton was naturally indignant at the unreasonable conduct of Lady Leigh, and, with Lady Nugent's permission, he brought Lilian home to his own house, where those to whom, of right, the office belonged, undertook the task of comforting her so effectually, that, after a few days spent with them, she appeared infinitely brighter and more cheerful than she had done for a long while past. She was made to be happy. She had a fund of joyousness and light-heartedness which beamed like a constant sunshine around her; though, like sunshine too, a little cloud of unkindness eclipsed it. She would never hear a word in Lady Leigh's dispraise, much less utter one, and the single shade in her contentment was her benefactress's anger.

The next morning, while Peter Carlton was at the Minister, Dorothea Sancton went to his house and found Lilian, as she had hoped, alone. There was a little excitement in Dorothea's manner, but Lilian, in the midst of her own great happiness, scarcely noticed how there were tears mingled

with her kisses and kind words, or how hard the kind words seemed to utter. There are certain women whom people do not credit with the possession of hearts—of hearts, that is, capable of loving and suffering passionately—and Dorothea Sancton was one of these. Lilian would have been astonished and almost incredulous if she could have seen the secrets of that warm bosom, into which she poured her innocent thoughts without reserve. She had no suspicion of the stifled pain that ached there, and no interpretation for those loving, jealous words—“Oh, my darling! I shall lose you both; you will not need poor Dorothea any more!”

Of course, Lilian persisted that they should need her as much as ever; indeed, her presence was as that of an affectionate elder sister to whom she could tell all her new hopes and fears; repeating the same trivialities again and again, without any dread of wearying or grieving the listener. And Dorothea heard it all patiently, encouragingly—it was her part and lot in life to bear and forbear for others every way.

Lovers are avowedly selfish and egotistical, and Robert Hawthorne and his Lilian were no exception to the rule. For the time being, the whole world of each was in the other's presence. If Lilian was with Dorothea, she talked solely of Robert; and if Robert was with Dorothea, he talked solely of Lilian. What would you have? “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Dorothea longed that the marriage should be over, that she might get a respite from their cruel confidences; if she had loved them less, she would have grown impatient often.

But there were many things to settle before this desirable consummation could be accomplished; especially Lilian wished that Lady Leigh should forgive her and be reconciled, but the aggrieved patroness would hearken to no mediation. Robert, therefore, said they must marry in spite of her, and he began to make preparations at home for taking Lilian there. It did not occur to either of them to desire any other dwelling than the dreary house in Maiden Lane. In these old-fashioned times, young couples were not possessed with the ambition of beginning life where their parents were content to end it. They took their turn in the burden of the day, happy if they saw beyond its honest, toilsome hours a rest and a competence. But Robert had great pride and pleasure in embellishing the dull rooms to

their utmost capability of embellishment, and many and many an evening did he walk Dorothea Sancton through them by way of eliciting her approval or advice. It was not very often that the sunshine found its way into them, but that could not be helped; and when the evenings came, and the dingy street prospect was shut out, they were home-like and pleasant enough. Lilian liked them; she knew she should be happy with Robert, even if they had to live in a poor cottage; but so far from that, every one who was interested in her, except Lady Leigh, thought she was a fortunate girl making a most fortunate marriage.

## IX.

And one sunshiny September morning half the town made holiday to see the wedding. Lady Leigh being still obstinately antagonistic, Lilian would have no one with her except Dorothea Sancton; and the little party walked from the organist's house across the graveyard to the Minster. The Rev. Paul Wilson read the marriage service, Lady Nugent was present, with Mistress Alice Johnes; and the ceremony over, she kissed the bride, shook Robert Hawthorne by the hand, and signed the book as a witness: after which, she went up to the Minster Hill to tell her angry sister how lovely and innocent the bride looked, and how proud and happy the groom. Lady Leigh growled her disapprobation, and ventured to prophesy that, as Robert had given Lilian her first lesson in disobedience, he might expect to suffer the consequences hereafter himself—a lugubrious anticipation in which Lady Nugent did not share. In her heart she was glad that the young couple had found courage to brave her sister's displeasure and be happy.

Robert was to carry Lilian away into the lake country for a week or two, and when she had seen them off, Dorothea betook herself home to the old tea-shop in the Market-place. There had been a little hurry, a little white excitement dry-eyed and hot-lipped before; but when she sat down alone in the bay-window, she felt, for the first time in her life, the slow, dull pain of heart-ache; no spasm, wringing tears from her eyes or moans from her breast, but a dead weight infinitely more stilling. By and bye she opened her embroidery frame and tried to work, but her hand trembled

strangely. Her aunt could not come to her for an hour or more, and that reprieve gave her time to reason herself into quietness—quietness which seemed a little cold and hard at first, but which in process of time, ripened into even more than her old kindliness of disposition; for Dorothea Sancton learnt her lesson of life perfectly, and profited by her sorrow instead of rebelling against it. But that was the last wedding she ever went to as long as she lived.

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## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

## PRODIGAL'S PROGRESS.

"THERE is no sterner moralist than pleasure."

BYRON.

## I.

IF this pithy saying be true, pleasure must, Janus-like, bear two faces—one to seduce, and the other to repel—for she had not yet begun to read any of her stern lessons to Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent. The young prodigal was still in Paris and still leading with her his easy libertine life, when his father arrived there the winter after Robert's marriage. By virtue of his earlier introductions as Sir Philip Nugent's son he had an *entrée* into the best company, which he had retained when his real position became known by dint of his personal graces and lively talents. He was always a favorite amongst women, and had used his opportunities for the study of feminine idiosyncrasy not much to his advantage. He had discovered one or two mature Phyllises amongst his French friends who, while increasing his knowledge, did not improve his morals; who entangled him in quarrels, and in money difficulties, and upon whom he retaliated the luckless experience he had gained in his first love-fit much as might be expected. He was very cynical and unscrupulous; very extravagant, reckless, and magnificent; very handsome too, and with just sufficient of his ancient romance left to make him dangerously interesting to feminine imaginations. His pathetic little history was known amongst his friends, and some of them felt themselves engaged in an almost holy mission when they were consoling him.

He had not yet begun to fulfil any of the nobler promise of his youth—that is understood. Pleasure admits no rivals;



her soft empire is absolute. His brother used to write him urgent affectionate letters, begging him to come home to England and pursue the career he had begun with such success; but Cyrus laughed at his sermons, and scarcely answered one in ten. The fraternal love was still alive in his heart, but there were a thousand things to choke it up, and hide it even from himself. Every year the different paths they had chosen diverged farther and farther apart: neither could see yet whether they would ever again cross each other; but from the day Robert married, Cyrus felt as if his brother no more belonged to him as formerly. Perhaps his exacting temper was a little jealous of the new love which had taken the first place in Robert's heart, and refused to accept the second; the letter he wrote on the occasion certainly lacked his usual warmth, and contained more allusions than necessary to their different positions in the world, and the still wider gap the settling down of one into middle-class family life would make. Robert reasoned against these views, but to no purpose—probably because he was reasoning in the dark; he was quite ignorant of the ways and habits of Cyrus and his companions, and never once suspected how dull, mean, and poor his life must seem to these gay, pleasure-loving young men. On reading some of his hasty letters Robert had indeed experienced a transient pain, as a thought flashed into his mind that Cyrus was ashamed of him, but he drove it away as too mean, too injurious to his brother to be true. There was, I am afraid, some foundation for it, however. Cyrus's heart had got a very decided warp away from the old unselfish affection he cherished in his better days, for amongst his present companions he would have blushed to acknowledge his brother. It is not possible to live carelessly and falsely without blunting the finer perceptions of feeling; feeling may continue to exist even with crops of noxious weeds luxuriating all around it, cramping its roots and shading its sunshine; but the chances are that, if left in the tangle too long, it will wither and die down, blossomless and fruitless. Cyrus's habits now were such as most rapidly scorch up tender flowers of sentiment, generosity, and faithfulness, leaving behind an arid waste of stones and such wild briars and stinging-nettles as possess themselves of desolate places. Whether the experience of life would ever break up for him his fallow ground and root out the thorns which were now overrunning

it, would take a very far-sighted prophet to predict; for at this time the young man lived in it as rejoicingly and contentedly as if it were a very garden of Armida.

## II.

Cyrus was not aware of Sir Philip Nugent's being in Paris until one night, at the entrance of the Opera-house, he came upon him suddenly with his beautiful young wife leaning on his arm. Cyrus would have passed them without recognition, but Sir Philip exclaimed, with eager surprise—

“Stay, Cyrus!” and held out his hand as if the rencontre were wholly welcome to him.

The young man could not reject it; he was now sufficiently cured of his old malady to make restoration to his former favor quite acceptable, and as his father's look and gesture appeared to say that he forgot his misdemeanors and frankly forgave him all, he was perfectly willing, and even glad, to meet him half way. Phyllis gave him an unsteady glance, and gathered her cloak closer at the throat with her disengaged hand, and shivered as if she felt a sudden chill, and smiled, and said a few common-place words, and drew herself up with an air of pride, and drooped her head and blushed, and looked restless and fearful, all of which Cyrus saw without seeming to see anything, and conquered effectually by the gay *insouciance* of his greeting.

He went into their *loge* with them at his father's invitation, and stayed through the first piece, talking and laughing in the easiest and most disengaged manner in the world. Phyllis was very silent, and sat with her eyes turned gloomily upon the stage, but Sir Philip was in the highest good-humor at this unexpected reconciliation with his dear son. Whatever his delinquencies might have been he was quite in the temper to excuse them all. The young man's manner was greatly improved; it was no longer tenacious or very genuine, perhaps, but it had a graceful ease, lightness, and polish, and pleasantness which some men have a facility for acquiring under the tutelage of some women. Toward Phyllis it was admirable; cool, yet tintured with deference—exactly the manner of a well-trained son toward the woman his father has chosen to marry; whose position he rever-

ences, but whose person he does not very profoundly respect. Phyllis felt the subtle distinction, and the contempt it hid, and once or twice she glanced up in his face hurriedly, the expression in her eyes changing from a mute imploring look to a well-simulated indifference or defiance. Her cheeks were fevered and her lips parched; her little foot once or twice beat restlessly on its velvet cushion; and it is just possible that for an hour or two she underwent that sort of pain or misery which would have made her Cyrus's enemy if she had not once loved him, or if she had not felt now that his mocking thoughts wronged her. But she had pride and wisdom enough to see at once that she must never attempt to set herself right with him; and when he took his leave, she acknowledged it with a calm dignity which did the utmost credit to her mother's training. Cyrus went away rather doubtful and confused; perhaps he had not come out of that rencontre quite so triumphantly as he intended to do, for the sensation it left behind was still one of mortification and annoyance.

After loitering about for a little while to rid himself of it, he entered the *loge* of some other friends who had been expecting him all the evening, and observing the mysterious little passages in Sir Philip Nugent's box with real feminine curiosity. These friends were two ladies and the son of the elder, a young man of his own age—agreeable people, but not of the very best tone. Madame Duluc had still pretensions to beauty, but her widowed daughter, Madame de Montrichet, had beauty itself, and that order of fascination which is the special attribute and weapon of her countrywomen. She was three or four years older than Cyrus and half a century wiser, but he had contrived to get the mastery over her feelings, and to make her conceive a *grande passion* for him without pledging his own sentiments at all. He amused himself in doing that sort of mischief which Satan is said to provide for idle hands, and found her but too easy an accomplice.

As he appeared and began to offer his compliments and excuses, Madame de Montrichet made him a little *moue*, and asked who then was that *blonde Anglaise*, that *fade insulaire* with the elderly man to whom he had been talking so long.

"Madame, she is my mother," responded Cyrus, with cynical gravity, upon which madame laughed, recovered her

smiles, and said he was a very good child, and fixed her great black eyes upon Phyllis, who was nearly opposite, with a curious stare. Phyllis noticed the meeting between the two, and averted her innocent, English eyes the moment they met the other's cruel gaze—averted them with an expression of such repugnance as the experienced, elegant, swarthy, French coquette could not fail to interpret. She turned her head sharply round toward Cyrus, and whispered hotly—

“How do you say, she is your mother?”

“Yes, madame; that is, the lady is my father's wife. You find her beautiful?”

Madame de Montrichet did not find her beautiful; she found her too white and cold, blemishes which did not belong to her own meridional charms. She tried to get up a lover's quarrel with Cyrus on the spot, but he was too preoccupied for the moment, and would not indulge her; also when Sir Philip Nugent and his wife were leaving their *loge* he quitted her hastily, and went to rejoin them. Madame de Montrichet devoured her heart with tears of rage that night, as the phrase is. It was under her and even less excellent instructresses that Cyrus was accomplishing the education which Phyllis had begun.

When Cyrus reappeared and met Sir Philip conducting his wife to her carriage, he received permission to present himself at their breakfast-table on the following morning.

“You will meet Lady Leigh, who is now with us,” added his father, graciously, “and must make your peace.”

Cyrus replied that he should be glad of the opportunity, and just before the carriage dashed off through the dim streets, he lifted his hat with an air of dutiful deference to his *mother*; then, instead of repairing to Madame de Montrichet's little supper, or any other of his usual haunts to finish the night, he went home to his apartment in the Rue Rivoli in an unusually sober and reflective state of mind.

Would it be expedient, he was inquiring of himself—would it be expedient to ask his father once more to clear him from the burden of his debts, and start him in a new life, or would it not? The sum of his difficulties was so great that the theme was a dangerous one to broach; but Sir Philip was now in a forgiving mood, which might wear off and never recur; was it, then, advisable to take immediate advantage of it? Madame de Montrichet would have

counseled him, "Yes." How greatly Cyrus's tone of feeling was changed since he was a boy may be judged from these paltry speculations; to turn the love or weakness of another to his own account, to make a temporary repentance serve a selfish end (for he could not delude himself into believing that he really wished to abjure his pleasant life), did not revolt him now, or cause him one spasm of shame. When life begins to hinge itself on expediciencies there is rottenness at the core; but, having thought the subject over for an hour, and twisted it on every side without forcing from it an eligible design, he gave it up, exclaiming, with what seemed to himself like magnanimity—

"*Chè sardà, sardà*—let things take their chance!"

### III.

The next morning when Cyrus reached the *hôtel* which Sir Philip Nugent had taken for the winter, he found him alone reading his English newspaper. They breakfasted together, neither young Lady Nugent nor Lady Leigh appearing. Sir Philip thought it necessary to explain: "Lady Nugent is tired from last night's exertion, and Lady Leigh still feels herself aggrieved, as much from Robert's having recently stolen Lilian away, as from your own old offences, I believe. You know women must always have their own time to come round."

Cyrus laughed as if he were aware of it; but had not found them very implacable as regarded himself, though he said meekly that he should have been very happy to pay his respects to Lady Leigh. Sir Philip then began to question him about his friends, his occupations, and his amusements, but though the opening was there, and probably made for the purpose, he did not elicit any confession of debt or difficulty. It was not that the graceless young fellow experienced any twinge of real compunction at the idea of trading on this revived affection, but that the ice of mistrust which had been the barrier betwixt them before interposed itself again and sealed his lips. It was a curious mixture of pride, subjection, and an ineffaceable sense of injury that composed it; on his way through the streets he had almost made up his mind to speak openly—even to *claim* help as a right; but once in his father's presence his courage failed,

and he was again the awed, distrustful youth of three years ago. Sir Philip betrayed no disappointment, but when he saw that the interview was not likely to have the wished-for result of admitting him into his son's confidence, he proposed that they should exchange their present quarters for the winter drawing-room, which the ladies generally favored in the morning. It was, however, unoccupied when they entered, and while Sir Philip went in search of his wife, Cyrus amused himself by making his observations on the pretty little apartment which he saw at the first glance was Phyllis's chosen retreat.

The room was octagonal in form, with the ceiling coved to a knot in the centre, from which depended a small chandelier of cut glass—the walls were paneled in white and gold—each panel embellished with either a mirror or a picture. A soft crimson carpet covered the floor, and a snowy mat, into which the feet sank over the instep, lay before the open porcelain stove. The draperies were of crimson silk, and the covers of the luxurious couches and chairs were of the same rich hue. A basket filled with moss and choice flowers stood in one window and an exquisite little group of statuary upon a pedestal in another; a glass door, one half of which was now folded back, led down by three marble steps into a dome-shaped conservatory, filled with choice evergreens and camelias in full flower. The wood that was burning in the stove had some perfumed twigs amongst it that filled the room with a warm scented atmosphere, which by some mystical association connected itself with Phyllis's memory in Cyrus's mind. He was glancing over the ephemeral works, religious and otherwise, which strewed the tables, when the door opened, and Lady Leigh and young Lady Nugent entered, with his father following.

Cyrus had been rather curious as to his reception this morning, but Phyllis met him with a calm gentle dignity, and gave him her white little hand quite naturally, then dropped into a low chair beside the fire, and shaded her face from it with an Indian screen which Sir Philip handed to her, as if it were the approach to the blaze that had raised the tender rose upon her cheek; she took the screen with a smile which showed her dimples and teeth in the old charming way, and which made Cyrus lose his memory for an instant, and rendered him almost oblivious of the very grand and formal greeting Lady Leigh vouchsafed to him; but,

the treacherous moment past, he fell easily into conversation about the last night's performance, the singers, and other common topics of fashionable society, Sir Philip lending his voice in the most common-place way, as if he were either unconscious or insensible to the awkwardness of the meeting.

Lady Leigh seemed rather annoyed and impatient, but Lady Nugent was pleasantly responsive; she had a little word and a little opinion on most social subjects, and could make little talk as easily as the most veteran of her sex, and give it an air of substance which it had not, when the occasion required. It required it now; if Sir Philip was reconciled to his son—he was again to come about them—she must fix their relative positions at once. Cyrus felt himself put down and put away with an admirable coldness, which yet did not mortify him as her manner had done the night before. His reflection upon it was—"Phyllis knows her place as my father's wife and fills it well; that little air of dignity becomes her, and I will accept it; I dare say she would stand my friend if I wanted an advocate with him—at least, it will be my own fault if I make her my enemy. She was weak, but she has not a bad heart."

Cyrus's estimate of Phyllis was just; she was quite disposed to be his friend if he would let her be so in peace; but she rather distrusted his moderation, and not without reason; for many a bitter thought surged to his lips during that morning's talk which only a sense of pity caused to die unspoken. There was that spice of masculine vanity and cruelty in his temper which would have keenly delighted in trying to what extent he could torture her still, and which would have accepted her ineffectual writhings as a tribute to his revenge. Lady Leigh had divined this characteristic in him and had put Phyllis on her guard, so that Cyrus did not once surprise her out of her gentle calm. Her manner was very good now; gracious, yet a little lofty, as if she felt herself weighted with a dignity rather cumbrous for her years, but which she liked, and would like still better as she wore into its use; toward Sir Philip it was softened by a submissive womanly deference which was almost affectionate. *Affectionate* is just the word that describes Phyllis; there was not a grain of passion in her composition, but she was naturally affectionate, and being happy according to her capacity for happiness,

having rich dresses, splendid jewels, costly furniture, and fine equipages—having, in fact fulfilled her vocation to her own satisfaction, her heart had got fair play and had bloomed into what her husband, and most other people too, felt to be a very kind heart indeed. So much in this world depends on winning what we want; if Phyllis had missed it, the chances are as ten to one that she would have withered into dryness and sourness, instead of ripening into the very pleasant-flavored fruit she was. Neither fruits nor human hearts ever attain a mellow perfection in ungenial soil or constant shadow, and her prosperity had been very good for Phyllis—like a sunny south wall to a peach. She had a little baby girl, too, and no doubt, mother-love was maturing her character most of all.

While they were all engaged in their idle talk, Cyrus had seen two figures flitting backward and forward in the garden beyond the conservatory, one of which he supposed to be little Lola, and by way of drawing Lady Leigh into the conversation, from which she had grimly held herself aloof, he inquired if she had the child in Paris with her.

"Yes, I have," curtly replied the patroness of orphans; "since your brother robbed me of Lilian Carlton, she is all I have left—and she, little ungrateful, wants to leave me too."

"To leave you?" said Cyrus, interrogatively.

"She has a passion for music and a genius too, they tell me; already she is an actress and pants to follow in her mother's steps: at fourteen she is almost a woman, and of that determined, violent character which is to me most repellent. Lola has disappointed me in one sense as profoundly as—as other people have disappointed me in another."

Cyrus understood the inuendo to glance at himself, and, half deprecatingly, hoped that in the end Lady Leigh would have cause to see that she had not put her faith either in Lola or in other people in vain. She passed the reply over and said, as if she had not been interrupted, "And so I am going to restore her to her own people, who are all either singers or players, and they can finish her training to their own satisfaction. I leave her behind when I go to England."

"She is walking with Félicie under the veranda now," said Lady Nugent; "those two have a thousand confidences to make to each other; it would be amusing to know what they find to talk about all day."

"Félicie tells stories of her convent, and Lola talks about



lovers, and music, and dreams, and feelings, in her rhapsodical way, I have no doubt; and perhaps she intersperses those themes with tirades against my dull old house on the Minster Hill, now and then," said Lady Leigh, with a bitterness that betrayed what she mentioned as conjectural to be an ascertained fact for her.

Cyrus turned his head and leant back in his chair to look out of the window, and Lola, happening to glance up at the moment, saw and immediately recognized him. Uttering an eager exclamation of surprise and delight, she threw off her companion's arm, opened the garden-door into the conservatory with a violence perilous to the glass, and ran breathless up the steps into the *salon*, while Cyrus rose to meet her. Lady Leigh uttered a word of warning, but in vain; Lola's joy was far too enthusiastic and impulsive to drop into decorous silence in a moment, and Cyrus learnt without a morsel of reserve, that she had been hoping for this day for ever so long, and that it was the most glorious day of her life. "Félicie and I have talked about it often!" cried she; "I was sure you would come back, and that I should see you again, and so was she."

"We have our little romance already," said Sir Philip Nugent, laughing, while Cyrus feigned to take the young damsel's rapture in the most serious earnest, and Lady Leigh exclaimed, with asperity—

"Lola, your impulsiveness is ridiculous; besides, you are growing too old for such nonsense! Let Cyrus's hand go and sit down quietly; you are no longer a baby."

The child obeyed, but her little heart still panted, and her olive cheeks glowed with delight; she scarcely withdrew her eyes from him for a moment, and Cyrus was even rather amused at her passionate enthusiasm and wondered how he had become the object of it. A few remembered caresses, a few kind words, a few commendations of her childish beauty at a time when her life was not overburdened with such pleasures, had won her heart long ago; and imagination, the glowing, grateful southern imagination, had enhanced them since to the point of making her believe that Cyrus was the best and kindest person in the world, and that she ought to love him more dearly and faithfully than others were less his friends than formerly. The tears sprang to her eyes as she watched him and remembered how good, and kind, and flattering he used to be to her.

She was not pretty, but her face had its fascination; the features were clear and delicate, the complexion olive, the eye dark and passionate and full of fire, but there was an expression about the brow and lips, which testified to the wild blood in the heart, and the small soft hands had an involuntary way of twisting and clenching themselves which promised as sudden and dangerous a hate as her face promised a sudden and passionate love. She was rather small but exquisitely shaped, and her movements had all the soft, lithe grace of a young leopardess; Lady Leigh's systematic training had not succeeded either in changing or in taming this wild creature's temper; and perhaps she was less reluctant than she appeared to relinquish the care of her in the critical years that were coming. She spoke of her still as ungrateful, but from the first there never had been and never could be any liking between the two. Lady Nugent rather admired Lola, whose temperament was so contrary to her own. She liked to pique her into an outburst of passion or affection, and to watch the display as a psychological study of a rare kind; but Lola had a strong aversion to the pretty, fair lady, whom she remembered as the beloved of Cyrus.

"You have left Félicie, then?" Phyllis said, with feigned reproachfulness; "Félicie will think you are inconstant, Lola."

"I will bring her in," replied Lola, and, holding out a hand of invitation to Cyrus, she asked him if he would go into the garden with her in search of her friend. Cyrus acceded very gracefully; but as he went he could not resist the temptation to play with Lola's feelings a minute or two, so with a mischievous tender look he began to ask her how she contrived not to have forgotten him or—and here his faithless smile softened still more—"or chosen another lover."

Lola took it in earnest.

"You know," said she, vehemently, "I never *could* love any body but you."

"You used to say so long ago, but I thought you would forget. But are you still of the same mind about being my little wife—you once promised to be my little wife, did you not?" Cyrus did not recall this reminiscence as gravely as he ought to have done, indeed he laughed.

"Don't laugh! Here is Félicie,—is she not very beautiful? Next to you I love her the best in the world," said Lola, warmly.

Cyrus laughed again and looked down at the candid young face turned toward him, and for a moment he became rather sober, sober enough to answer her, with a sigh,—

"Don't waste so much goodness on me, little one, I'm not worth it."

"Oh! yes, you are worth any thing—every thing; Félicie is very curious to see you—come to her. Félicie, this is my friend," and, taking Cyrus by the hand, she presented him to a slim, auburn-haired girl, who advanced to meet them from one of the dank covered *alleys* to which she had retired when she first saw them approaching, perhaps as a vantage post of observation.

Cyrus bowed with grave courtesy, for this Félicie was not a mere child-playmate of Lola's, but a young lady fresh from her convent, with her little armory of beauties and graces still unproved. She blushed as red as the winter roses she held in her hand, and modestly cast down her eyes with an air which reminded him forcibly of some one else in her maiden days. Cyrus always admired a fair woman, and though swarthy Spanish Lola claimed his admiration for her friend, she was not altogether delighted with his reply, that she was as lovely as an angel; there was nothing of the angel about Lola—and she knew it.

They all returned together to the *salon*, and found that during their absence the company had been increased by the arrival of a gray-haired personage whom Cyrus knew in society as M. de Montcontour, an ancient gentleman of family and impaired fortune, whose life had been of the freest. Félicie blushed again as he met her on the conservatory steps, presented a bouquet, and bowed over her hand with a lover-like air which was ridiculous; she stammered in answering his compliments, and withdrew her fingers from his clasp with irrepressible aversion; she was young and innocent, and had not learned the great lesson of discreet hypocrisy as yet. Cyrus interpreted the little scene correctly; and it occurred to him as an inspiration that he might amuse his leisure by robbing old M. de Montcontour of his bride, and teaching Félicie the pleasant use of the heart which her family had commanded her to devote to this ancient lover. He outstayed the visitor, who eyed his handsome young presence with some disfavor; and as Félicie and Lola betook themselves to the garden again when M. de Montcontour was gone, and Sir Philip left the *salon* to give some order to

his groom about a horse for his son's use, he made an opportunity of asking two or three questions as a prelude to his idle designs. Lady Leigh undertook to answer him, for she was disposed to be suspicious of his innocent looks, and she determined that this time he should not walk into mischief blindfold—a very unsophisticated idea of my Lady Leigh, and one which made Cyrus laugh bitterly in his heart.

"Who is that pretty friend of Lola's—that Félicie?" asked he, carelessly.

Phyllis looked at him over her screen, and Lady Leigh said—

"You remember my old companion, Madame Lefèvre? Félicie is her niece. Madame Lefèvre's brother was restored to his family estates, and as Félicie was his only child she has quite a magnificent fortune."

"Which, if I may hazard a guess, is going to repair that of M. de Montcontour."

"Precisely. Félicie is an orphan, but the marriage was arranged two years ago, before her father died; it will unite two very ancient families, and is in all respects a suitable arrangement."

"According to French ideas and customs," remarked Phyllis, softly.

Cyrus did not quite catch the words, and begged her to repeat them.

"I said that the arrangement was a suitable one according to French ideas and customs," she replied, nervously playing with the handle of her screen.

Cyrus looked most demurely puzzled for a moment, and then said, significantly—

"I did not quite understand at first; of course, such arrangements are foreign to our English practice. We never hear of sixteen and sixty casting their lot together, or of beauty selling itself for rank and money, do we?"

He glanced carelessly from Lady Leigh to Phyllis, whose eyes drooped abashed before his; and having witnessed that effect of his power to wound, he determined henceforward to be magnanimous, and if he did not respect his father's wife, to treat her, at least, as if he did. Perhaps he had not expected an answer to his cynically bland "do we?" for he seemed rather surprised when Lady Leigh immediately replied—

"I have seen such arrangements even in England, Cyrus, that have turned out very well. There are some women who are the better and the happier for resting on the experience of men older than themselves—though young men have the *vanity* to think otherwise. Lady Nugent will agree with me, I know."

"Oh, yes; it is a truth I realize every day in my own experience," answered Phyllis, courageously. She blushed a little, and she laughed rather nervously; but Cyrus felt that what she said she meant, and meant him to believe as well.

"Cyrus must bow to such an authority," added Lady Leigh, delighted at Phyllis's audacity; "but now, my dear, we must send him away, and take our drive with the children, or the sun will be gone."

And again, with a lurking feeling of defeat, the young man took his leave until the evening, when he was to dine with his father.

#### IV.

Félicie and Lola had a new theme for their confidences now; that is, Lola had. They were glad when the drive was over, that they might get together again to talk about Cyrus.

"Is he not beautiful? Has he not fire and spirit?" demanded Lola, proudly. "Did I not tell you what a prince he was?" Félicie murmured, "Yes," and picked M. de Montcontour's flowers to bits absently. "He is to return this evening, we shall see him again! Stay, Félicie! I will read you some of his poetry;" and Lola sped off to her room and brought the little gray volume, which was the first blossom of Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent's muse.

The two girls had been walking in the *allée*, dank and cold, but when Lola came back with the book, she announced that the little *salon* was empty, and that there was a good fire, should they go there? And Félicie being very willing, they passed through the conservatory and took possession of Lady Nugent's quarters. Lola deposited herself upon the snowy mat before the stove, leaning her elbow upon a low chair, and holding the book in her lap, while Félicie coiled herself luxuriously amongst the cushions of one of the crimson couches, and bent an intent face toward the reader. She had a very imperfect knowledge of English, but the

musical flow of the lines through Lola's liquid voice pleased her sense of sound, and some of the sentiments penetrated beyond her ears; she noticed and commented on one fact presently.

"All the women in his verses are fair and have blue eyes," said she; "blue eyes and hair like threads of burnished gold."

Lola looked up at her friend quickly, then down again at her book.

"And yet he says, 'fair and false,'" replied she, solemnly; "but that was written before—long before; it was a prophecy, then."

"What nonsense are you talking, Lola? 'Fair and false' is a proverb," said Félicie, laughing.

"You do not know, you do not understand."

"Then tell me; explain,—quick!"

Lola took no notice of this impatient adjuration; she was murmuring over to herself certain lines on the subject of love, which, naturally enough, were a puzzle to her. Suddenly lifting up her face, she eyed Félicie for a moment or two very intently, and then said—

"Félicie, do you love M. de Montcontour?"

Félicie laughed, and replied frankly, "No."

"Then why do you marry him? Do you expect that you shall be happy?"

"What do I know about it?" said Félicie, impatiently. "I come out of my convent and am told there is M. de Montcontour—there is my *futur*. What can I do? These things are arranged for us; no one asks us whether we like our fate or not."

"I would not be arranged for—I would choose," replied Lola, with a gesture of her head which signified revolt. "Félicie, if you were fond of any one else, would you marry M. de Montcontour *then*?"

"I suppose I should, Lola," was the rather *triste* answer.

"If you were fond of—if you had such a lover as—as Cyrus?"

Félicie stirred uneasily amongst her cushions, and said, "Lola, you are a child, and do not know what you are talking about."

"And I am sure, Félicie, you don't either. Look at M. de Montcontour's flowers."

Félicie glanced at the relics of her lover's gift and laughed.

"Gather them up, and throw them into the fire, Lola. Oh! I am tired." She stretched her arms above her pretty head wearily, yawned, laughed again, and wished herself back in her convent almost.

Just at this juncture Lady Nugent came in, beautifully dressed for dinner, in green velvet, and with a soft swan's-down tippet over her shoulders.

"Idle children," cried she; "lazy loungers!" and then she dropped upon the couch by Félicie, and let that tasteful damsel rearrange the ornaments she wore in her hair. Félicie was a very caressing girl; she had a pleasure in touching and petting any person whom she loved, and she loved Phyllis, who had always shown herself indulgent for her more than any one out of her convent. She loved her more than Lola; and Lola, who suspected it, was jealous of these caresses.

Lady Leigh entered, and sent Lola away to her tea, and admonished Félicie that she would be late for dinner, if she did not go and dress at once.

"What shall I wear?" whispered the young lady to Phyllis; "rose, blue, or blanc?"

"What does it matter, *ma mie*? M. de Montcontour is not coming," replied Lady Nugent.

Félicie started away with a rather guilty cheek; perhaps she was not thinking of M. de Montcontour just then. She arrayed herself all in white, pure as a lily, and went to Mistress Hilton's room, where Lola had her tea with the waiting-woman.

"You have made yourself beautiful, Félicie—beautiful as a princess!" cried the child, ardently. "Oh! I wish I were like you!"

"Princes and princesses, Lola! you use royal words to-day! Your friend Cyrus is a prince and I am a princess! and what are you? *la petite Cendrelle*?"

Félicie, with one of her slender white hands, gave some of Lola's disheveled hair a rather contemptuous toss over her face, and then stooped down and kissed away the vexed fold from her swarthy brow.

Lola sat very quiet when she was gone, until Mistress Hilton had finished her lengthy tea; then she crouched down in her favorite attitude before the stove and stared into the red embers, dimly dreaming all the time.

"Why do you press your hand over your heart, Miss

Lola? It is such a strange action for a child," said the waiting-woman, kindly.

"I have often a pain there, Hilton."

"Don't think about it, and it will go away. Are you going into the *salon* to-night?"

"Yes."

"Then come, and let me dress you."

Lola yielded herself up reluctantly, and while Mistress Hilton was plaiting her coarse hair before the glass, she asked her—

"Hilton, do you think fair women or dark women the most beautiful?"

"Oh! Miss Lola, fair women, to be sure. Look what a great beauty young Lady Nugent is, and her skin is as white as milk; and Mam'selle Félicie is almost as fair as if she were covered with pearl-powder, though she never touches any thing of the kind."

"And Lilian was fair too?"

"Yes; Miss Lilian was like nothing so much as the sweet lilies of the valley in our garden at Walton."

Lola was silent for a few minutes, looking at her own dark face.

"And what am I like, Hilton?" she asked, presently.

"You are as brown as a nut; why, Miss Lola, you're no beauty at all, was the reply, rather ungracious, it may be owned.

A few burning tears swelled into Lola's great black eyes, but she did not let them fall; and when Mistress Hilton had finished dressing her, instead of going down to the *salon* she resumed her place before the stove. Some people's thoughts flow naturally into words, Lola's flowed into music; and very soon she began to sing some little canzonets of a rather mournful cadence, still pressing her hand over her heart. Mistress Hilton's dry old voice tried to chime into the tune now and then.

"Hilton, do you love me?" the child asked, suddenly.

"Yes, Miss Lola, I like you well enough; you are better than you were, but you are a vast deal of trouble still," said Hilton, coolly.

"Nobody loves me best—Félicie loves Lady Nugent best, and Cyrus loves——"

"Come, come, Miss Lola, don't you get jealous and tease yourself," interrupted the waiting-woman. "I never saw



such a child for making herself unhappy all along of fancying things. One never knows what you would be at."

"I don't expect *you* to know, Hilton; if *they* cannot understand me, how should *you*?"

The waiting-woman shrugged her shoulders, and said she was a queer, uncivil little thing, and advised her to go to the *salon*.

"They will be coming out from dinner directly, and in half an hour they'll be off to the opera or somewhere," said she.

"Félicie will not go—I wonder whether Cyrus will?"

"Of course he will; there, get away, and put off that dolorous look. Is the pain gone?"

"It comes back again when I think of it."

"Then don't think of it."

Lola had had Cyrus's book in her lap all this time; and, before restoring it to its place, she kissed it as if it were a sentient thing. Mistress Hilton said if she did not see she was only a bit of a child, she should have fancied her love-sick at once.

## V.

Lola had the *salon* to herself for ten minutes or so, and then the whole party came from the dining-room together; they had been talking on some subject that amused them, for they came in laughing, Cyrus and Félicie the merriest of all. Lady Leigh had unbent from her affronted stateliness, and when they rallied round the stove, she called the young man to a seat beside her and bade him talk to her, and tell her what he had been about all these two years and more in Paris.

"Let Sir Philip and Lady Nugent go to the play alone, you are to stay with me," and she tapped his hand authoritatively with her fan, a sign that he was in as high favor as ever.

"And Mdlle. Félicie?" asked Cyrus, glancing aside at the very pretty flushed young face which was bending itself affectionately over Lady Nugent's shoulder.

"Félicie goes nowhere at present;" and thus assured, Cyrus permitted it to be seen that he was very willing to stay.

Sir Philip and Lady Nugent had a prior engagement to

accompany the Lowthers to the first representation of a new comedy, and they presently went off together; Lady Leigh also, after listening drowsily for some time to Cyrus's talk, began to droop and finally to nod, as her after-dinner custom was, and then the three young ones had their little whispered colloquy without reserve.

Félicie could not speak or move without a glow rising to her cheek, and her unaccustomed graces were really a precious charm to Cyrus. He thought "Here is an innocent girl, beautiful too, and as fresh as a daisy; it is a sacrifice to give her to that old *roué*—a cruel sacrifice;" and he threw into his voice and manner a beguiling interest and flattery which failed not to captivate her imagination. She was rather formal in her replies to him, the conventual atmosphere seeming still to weigh down her natural vivacity, but in the quick turning away of her head, and the shy lowering of her heavy eyelids, and the slight tremble of her rosy lips, he recognized the early airs with which love ruffles the surface of young hearts and young lives. He had about the same degree of interest in observing these signs as an angler has in playing the fish at the end of his line—the pastime amused him for the hour, but he did not intend to make it a vital pursuit—except to the unhappy fish.

Lola watched them intently. What was there that her intuitive perception did *not* detect? Félicie at one moment was looking pleased and happy, when some malicious elf prompted the jealous child to offer her one or two faded flowers that had been spared of M. de Montcontour's bouquet. Félicie took them absently, but when she saw what they were she cast them aside with a gesture of great impatience. Cyrus could not help being amused, he understood so distinctly what it meant.

Cyrus had not much to say to Lola, and Lola's jealousy increased in proportion as she felt herself neglected, until she became so perverse and out of temper that she would make a noise and awaken Lady Leigh—an office for which Félicie did not thank her.

"Cyrus, you have been here long enough—go away," was her imperative command, almost as soon as she roused up to a sense of what was passing, and Cyrus, being for the present rather tired, not unwillingly obeyed.

Félicie was absorbed and silent when he was gone. What a spur her life had received within the last twenty-four hours!

She was obliged to come down from dreams and listen to Lady Leigh's remarks on M. de Montcontour, her trousseau, which was being prepared, and other topics connected nearly or remotely with the event of her approaching marriage. Félicie recalled the green walls of her convent, which used to seem so like a prison, with a sentiment of regret and affection—ah! she thought, how glad she should be if she could fly once more to their peaceful shelter!

Lola made her two or three cruel little speeches when they were again alone—tiny stabs, but so sharp and poisoned that their friendship expired of them that night, and was buried the next morning under a cairn of reproaches, violent and bitter. Lola hated Félicie with a hate ten times as strong as the love with which she had loved her; but this transformation is no novelty in feminine experience, and needs, therefore, no more comment.

## VI.

Day by day appeared at Sir Philip Nugent's *hôtel M. de Montcontour*, making his visits of ceremony and presenting his great costly bouquets to his *fiancée*; and day by day also appeared Cyrus, with his gay *insouciant* air, his handsome countenance, and his idle flatteries. There were little knots of Russian violets—not publicly or ostentatiously presented—worn in Félicie's bosom, sunned at Félicie's lips, watered by Félicie's tears, entombed in a relic-box by Félicie's hands, which were the witnesses of low-spoken words, tender vows, tender palpitations, covert hopes, and covert fears such as strew the paths of hidden love.

It was a cruel game, and seeing that the victory could but turn one way, I do not like to follow its moves and stratagems very closely. There is something too living and real, something too *helpless*, in the quiver of a young maiden's heart lying at the mercy of such a man as Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent for the study to be a very pleasant one. At last there came a day when Félicie flung herself upon her knees before Phyllis, and in a flood of passionate sorrow confessed her love, beseeching her to seek some mode of deliverance for her from that living death to which she was condemned with M. de Montcontour. Now Phyllis had discovered that out of every life more or less of sacrifice is required, and she thought that the time was come for Félicie to make hers.

But she comforted her with caresses and kind words, and having sought an opportunity of speaking to Cyrus alone the same day, she said to him:

"Cyrus, you are making nothing but misery here; I want to beg you to go away."

Cyrus feigned not to understand her, so she asked—a faint color staining her cheek as she did so—"Do you *love* Félicie?"

He was taken aback for an instant. "It is a strange question for *you* to ask," replied he gloomily; "but if it imports to you to know, I never *loved* but one woman in my life."

"Then be generous and go away—I will explain to Sir Philip. We cannot send Félicie home without remark—you will go?"

"If you desire it—yes."

"It is for Félicie's sake."

"I understand."

If the requisition had been made to him by any other envoy or in any other form, he would have set it at defiance; but, obedient to Phyllis's lightest word, for the sentiment of the thing, and because he had no deep feeling at stake, he went away from Paris without even an attempt to let Félicie know of his intentions. He betook himself to the southern provinces, and made an excursion into Spain, remaining absent two months or more. At first, Félicie was stunned and incredulous; a truly loving heart is slow to believe in the utter coldness of its idol; there were long dull hours of misery unchequered with any hope, and agonies of passionate tears, during which hot-spirited Lola's friendship revived to comfort her. There were reasonings and rebellions, and weariness and hopelessness, and subjection, and, finally, there was a great marriage celebrated with great pomp, and beautiful Madame de Montcontour was launched upon the treacherous tide of fashionable life, about as helpless to resist its adverse currents and sunken rocks as a child's paper boat is to resist the sudden gusts of wind which swell the ripples of the stream and engulf it.

## VII.

Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent came back and offered his heartless congratulations with the rest of the little court of Félicie's admirers. He thought he saw traces of tears, and suffering, and hopelessness in her face, and was tempted to blame himself and pity her. His vanity might be a little flattered by the love he had won and not known how to value; but when she showed him a cold reception and seemed to forget all the old passages between them that his tender manner sought to recall, he was piqued and even indignant. His vanity could not brook such a show of indifference. He aimed at gaining the first place amongst her admirers; she was singularly lovely, and perhaps what now stood for his affections became entangled at last; it is hard to meddle with fire and escape burning.

But Félicie had a safeguard in her own youth and purity, which she would never have found in the old man to whom family convenience had married her, or in the social tone by which she was surrounded. Though Cyrus followed her like a shadow, made her talked about, made M. de Montcontour furiously jealous, he could never again win a smile to her lips or any word but the most formal and ceremonious. This frigidity piqued him still more keenly, and strengthened the bonds of his enthrallment. He had remonstrances from his father, from Phyllis, from Lady Leigh; he had malicious inuendoes from his friends; but he chose to make himself a romance of perverse devotion and to continue his pursuit until it became almost a jest.

I say nothing of Félicie's tears, and agonies, and struggles before she was disenchanted; no doubt, they were as mournful as such experiences generally are. Failing any other triumph, Cyrus was gratified when it was one day rumored that Madame de Montcontour, in broken health and spirits, had retired from society, and secluded herself in a dismal château of her husband's in Touraine. There were a thousand stories and whispers afloat explanatory of her disappearance, which died away in their own good time. But here Félicie drops out of our history altogether, though she outlived most of those named in it. For the curious who would like to know more of her I may say that, remaining always in her seclusion, she brought up her one son, the

heir of Montcontour, religiously, grew year by year more devout, more charitable, more unceasing in works of mercy; striving by the thousand self-denials of her daily life to weigh down the balance against her heavy, repining thoughts, and winning amongst her people the reputation of a saint.

This little episode of her heart-break and his selfishness, is but one step in Prodigal's Progress.

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

## DEADLY NIGHTSHADE.

"The intellectual power through words and things  
Goes sounding on, a dim and perilous way."

## I.

WHEN Sir Philip Nugent returned to England in the spring, Cyrus came with him; his debts were paid a second time; and Lady Leigh promised him an addition of four hundred pounds to the annual allowance he received from his father, if he would abandon the class of associates who led him into such vicious extravagance. The proposition came at a juncture when the young man was rather bored and disappointed, so he gave free admission to all compunctious visitings, and expressed his willingness to be reformed. Hitherto it had seemed so out of all likelihood that he would ever achieve any thing worthy of his early promise, that those who had looked to him most confidently and loved him best were obliged to acknowledge that their hopes had issued in signal failure.

For a few months he lived in orderly fashion and studied hard, but so little stability of purpose did he possess that no sooner was Lady Leigh safe at Walton Minster, where she could no longer exercise surveillance over his proceedings, then he began to play truant from his books and desk as recklessly as ever he played truant from school at Chinelyn. Habits of pleasant indulgence are not so easily cast off as in the heat of good resolutions we like to suppose; indeed, no sovereign that we can elect to reign over us abdicates more unready than selfish ease. His present companions were of a more intellectual turn than any he had possessed before, but for that were they only, perhaps, the more dangerous, considering to what ends they exercised their men-

tal powers. At this period there was no coherence whatever in the life that Cyrus led ; because, false to his better self in thought, and word, and deed, the indestructible principle within him from time to time, made a futile grasping at the shadow of what he had let slip.

One blossom of his thoughtless life set at this epoch into the bitter Dead-Sea fruit of infidelity. We have all seen persons practically denying by their actions every religious law, who would yet start with indignant horror at hearing themselves designated infidels by name. But Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent proudly absolved himself from such a self-deceiving hypocrisy, by admitting with spurious candor that, as he could not believe the doctrines of Christianity, he would not be base enough to profess even negatively a faith which he had not. He had studied Strauss, he had taken counsel at the lips of Helvetius, and was become an enlightened man :—away with these fables, which were the swaddling-clothes of infancy and the appropriate guides of womanish minds ! Like others of his kind, the pupil became more irreverent than his teachers, and proclaimed himself emancipated when he had just loaded his limbs with the heaviest fetters.

We might experience more compassion for his delusions, if, in casting off the law of the Gospel, he had more strictly conformed himself to the sensible laws of nature and had lived the life of a conscientious and moral heathen ; but when the result of his so-called enlightenment was a mere course of indolent pleasure, the fact of his having any real thought on the matter is laid open to serious doubt. It becomes impossible to class him with those minds, earnest in their research, honest in their very errors, living by the natural light when they have lost the guidance of the spiritual light, which are the special product of a certain range of intellectual cultivation. The alloy of his mind was of a grosser matter, and sunk him into a lower deep.

It used once to be considered rather pious than otherwise to lay all our ills of body and estate to God's account—to say that it had pleased Him to visit us with such and such afflictions—whereas, if we had but the courage and sincerity to probe the matter to the quick, we must see that the Almighty would need to work a miracle to deliver us from the consequences of our own folly or our own sin. Cyrus had turned his life into a mere stage play—a system of tricks, and sham,



and glitter, which become sordid trumpery as soon as the lights are put out. But as the poor actor in the grand scene of the show is liable to be struck with a sudden sharp agony which he must hide under a smiling face, or a remembrance of the grim realities that await him after his part is played, so Cyrus, at every downward step of his career, had a check from the internal voice, and occasionally a short disgust at the uselessness and aimlessness of his existence. He had not, however, the candor to charge himself with the guilt which was the source of this depression; far rather would he lay the blame on the much-bearing shoulders of Fate, and take to himself the consolation that he was her ill-used butt.

This mood was only too brief and of too rare recurrence. Gay and defiant by nature, he could soon daff it aside, and plunge back into the noisy whirlpool, where the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God, sounds but seldom—where the flowers that brighten the banks are flowers of the deadly nightshade, and the feverish glow which is its sunshine is the phosphorescent light of internal corruption.

## II.

Robert Hawthorne had taken hope again from the simple fact of his brother's return to England and reconciliation with Sir Philip Nugent, but a greater and more startling disappointment than ever was preparing for him. Under pressure of Robert's entreaties, and, perhaps, in a dull desperation of indifference as to the pain it might inflict, Cyrus sent him a batch of papers which he told him were the first fruits of his manly studies. Robert was not a learned man or a man of even liberal culture, but he had a far-sighted, clear, and acute mind, and these reflections, essays, and casuistical treatises on matters of faith and revelation appeared to him like so much hazy trash which might be the product of fever dreams, but never of the honest desire to seek and know the truth. We may imagine how he would reply to them; how, looking to the substance, he would ignore the brilliance of style in which it was dressed, and the subtle ingenuity of argument by which the finely stuccoed, rotten, baseless fabric was shored up. The cunning perversion of intellectual power could not dazzle or mislead his plain understanding; the truth in homely garb was so familiar to

him that showy falsity, flaunting in many-hued shreds and patches, was a mere tragical scarecrow, fit only for the following of fools, blind and besotted.

There was, no doubt, some severity in his comments, though affection would certainly temper any reproof that Robert might address to his brother, but Cyrus chose to feel himself aggrieved and undervalued by the remarks, which left him not so much as a single foothold for even his literary vanity. In fact, the summing up of Robert's opinion might be comprehended in the one sentence, that the first fruits of his matured mind were very poor stuff, feeble as the babbling of idiocy, and mischievous as the pestiferous malaria of a stagnant morass.

Urged, perhaps, by his perverse pride, and willing to convince Robert that he could find acceptance for his views in one quarter if not in another, Cyrus immediately gave himself to the task of collecting his desultory pieces into a connected whole, and then of seeking a publisher who would be sensible of the honor of giving them to the world. In the course of this pursuit he met with several rejections, remonstrances, and mortifications; but he was at last successful; and Robert, without any notice in the interim, one day received a handsome octavo volume, which, to his inexpressible pain contained those wretched effusions of his brother invested with the dignity of print. The book obtained considerable notoriety, and won for its author about equal measures of reprobation and applause, food on which his craving vanity was not loth to feed. Lilian had never seen Robert so grieved and unhappy before. She was about to take up the volume and look into it, but he stayed her hand with a shudder.

"You cannot touch pitch and not be defiled, Lily," said he, and stirring a scarlet hollow in the fire, he burnt the book at once.

Robert felt it as a wanton insult that it should have been sent to him at all after the opinion he had already expressed; but after the lapse of a few weeks, when the soreness had worn off, he one morning announced to Lilian that he must go to London and seek an interview with his brother for the purpose of pleading with him personally to abandon his fatal errors. Lilian parted with him unwillingly the next day. It was the first separation since their marriage.

## III.

Robert had not his brother's address, but he obtained it at the house where his book was printed, and the same afternoon presented himself at the door and inquired for him. The female who answered him said that her master was absent at the time, but if he would walk in and wait, she would let him know in a minute or two when he would be likely to find him there. He was accordingly shown into a pretty gay drawing-room with two or three bird cages in the sunny window, and a silky spaniel basking on the rug in front of the fire, and many signs besides of feminine presence and occupation.

He was thinking "Could Cyrus have married and never told him?" when the door opened, and in came a very young girl, with a pretty, pert face, and an assured, lively, flippant air any thing but pleasing. She seemed startled at Robert's grave aspect, and stopped short in the middle of the room to ask abruptly—

"Who are you?" while her large blue eyes gleamed with petulant displeasure.

"I came to see my brother, Cyrus Hawthorne, but I must have been misinformed; this is not his home?" said Robert, uneasily.

"I know no Mr. Hawthorne, but Mr. Nugent lives here sometimes," was the reply.

Robert could not help a certain tone of severity that influenced his voice when he spoke again.

"If you will tell me where I am likely to find him, I will seek him elsewhere?" said he.

"I know nothing of what he does or where he goes when he is away from here," answered the girl, pouting.

She turned to the window, and as Robert left the room he saw that she began to chirp to the birds in the gilt cages, and to tease them by railing her fingers against the wires in a fretful impatient way, as if it eased her to transfer some of her own vain, passionate petulance to them.

He walked very quickly away from the house, which was in one of the suburbs, toward the town, his head bent down and his mind filled with sombre forebodings, until, at a turn in the road, he came suddenly upon his brother, and, at the first glance, was obliged to understand that he was not glad

to see him. Cyrus was, indeed, so taken by surprise that he did not speak until Robert held out his hand and said—

“I have just been to seek you.”

Then, after more than two years of absence, all he could find to answer was—

“And what brings you to town at this time of the year?”

“No business, except the desire to see my brother,” was the grave reply.

Cyrus paused on it for a moment, contemplating the respectable country tradesman with strange eyes, but at last, with something very like a blush and a nervous disconcerted laugh, he said—

“Well, Robin, what is it? I see you have a battery of Puritan eloquence ready to open fire upon me at once. I must cry your mercy for a few hours though.”

Robert would not accept this cavalier dismissal, and said—

“I left Lilian ailing, Cyrus, and must not stay in London long; will you not give me the rest of the day at the hotel where I am staying?”

“You are the same unspoilt, dear, good, old-fashioned fellow as ever, Robin; come back with me and dine.”

“No,” replied Robert, with stern significance; “I will not go back with you, though it seems hard to refuse to break bread under the roof which my brother calls home.”

“Not at all, my dear fellow; I meddle with nobody’s prejudices. The printer should have sent you to my rooms in the Strand; I am one of the working bees now and live in the hive; I’ll explain by and bye. Meanwhile walk slowly up and down here, and I’ll rejoin you in ten minutes or so.”

He set off with a rapid easy step in the direction from which Robert had come, and was soon out of sight; as for Robert, he had such a miserable rending at his heart as he had never felt in his life before. You understand how he loved his brother and will understand the pain. It must have left its trace upon his countenance, for when Cyrus came back to him he slipped his arm through his, and began to say, with a persuasive, deprecating air,—

“Now, Robin, don’t break your heart over such a worthless tag of humanity as I am—past mending, past reforming, past converting by any amount of sorrowful good counsel.

It is the book that has startled you, I suppose? I have had my ancient tutor, the devout and reverend Samuel, with me about that already—but what would you have? It is the confession of all the faith my experience of life has left me—'tis indeed." He still spoke in the same easy tone, throwing back his beautiful spirited head and stepping out firmly as if he were making the noblest admission in the world.

"I'm sorry to hear it, Cyr—your experience must then have been very bad."

"Be reasonable, Robin; what do you know of life? It has gone as smoothly with you as if your good genius had cast oil upon its waves; never an adverse gust, I do believe, never a blash of rain to wet your sails."

If he could have known—if Cyrus only *could* have known—the meaning of that little cloud floating up out of the future to lay waste his brother's home, and already casting its chill upon his heart, he would not have spoken thus; but Robert held his peace and let him talk on of his own troubles at the hand of Fate, as if he were the only person upon whom she ever cast a frown. He seemed to have a certain satisfaction in exalting his difficulties and making capital out of them.

"Here I am always beating up against contrary winds," said he, cheerfully. "My Lady Leigh urges me to work and redeem my reputation. I begin; I produce fruit in the shape of a speculative little book, behind which she immediately eclipses the light of her countenance, and declines to continue the supplies. Also my father ('tis ever the greatest sinner makes the straitest saint) professes himself scandalized by the publicity I have sought for my heterodox views, and seriously threatens that, if I do not suppress the second edition which my publisher is preparing, he also will cast me adrift. Now, if they think either to frighten me or to bribe me into doing anything so utterly suicidal, they will find themselves mistaken." Cyrus began to speak in his indifferent, laughing manner, but the last few sentences came out fiercely and defiantly.

"You do not seriously delude yourself into the belief that you are winning any *real* fame by it, do you, Cyr?" Robert asked.

"What care I for the applause of a mob who follow each other as blindly and unreasoningly as a flock of sheep with a priestly watch-dog to frighten them from straying out of

bounds! Only let me gather the suffrages of the few who dare to think and to emancipate their minds from the bonds imposed by a worn-out creed, and I am satisfied."

"That creed you mean can never be worn out while there is poverty and suffering and death in the world, Cyr. It is all the consolation thousands of us have to carry us from one end of life to the other, for it fits itself equally to our weakness at every stage. None of you speculatists have ever framed a system which suits humanity as does Christianity, and that argument would be sufficient to convince me that it was God's work without any other. As for your little book, it seems to me that every one of its puerile notions could be very easily answered."

"Then why is it not answered?" exclaimed Cyrus, hotly. "Why do not some of your wordy theologians take it up, and reply to it?"

"Probably because they do not think it worth their while. There are such evident elements of weakness and decay in all such works—and in yours particularly, because you have not even done it with conscientious care, and always seem doubtful of yourself even when making the most arbitrary assertions—that to bring any great power to overthrow it would be like planting a battery of cannon against a rotten garden fence which will tumble down of itself in the common course of events.

The angry blood flew into Cyrus's face, and he writhed with a secret mortification at Robert's just contempt for a book which he was inclined to look upon as a rather remarkable production. He was proud of his misshapen and decrepit child as mothers are of their little recklings.

While the brothers were talking they had walked very rapidly until they got into the tide of human life in the Strand; passing forward, they came to Waterloo Bridge, and moderated their steps in its comparative quiet. The October sun was setting with a long blood-red trail of light upon the river, for already the air was keen and frosty; but their discussion had heated them both, and they arrived at the hotel where Robert was staying all in a glow. Scarcely had either yet thought of common-place fraternal greetings or inquiries, but when they were shut up in a private room and seated one on each side of a cheerful fire, as by a simultaneous impulse, each seized the other's hand and shook it warmly.

"We are friends all the same, Robin, are we not?" cried Cyrus, with brightening eyes, while the old tide of natural affection, flowing back over his heart, carried away before it all pride and reserve and annoyance. "It does me good to see you—nay, if I had lived with people like you and Uncle Joshua all my life, I should hardly have made such wreck of it as I have done."

"Is there any possibility of prevailing on you to come home to me and Lillian now? Oh! I wish you would," replied Robert, with eager affection. "You said a little while ago that you did not believe I had ever had cross or care in my life—is it nothing to find you what you are? Oh! Cyr, it is the heaviest cross that could have been given me to bear."

"Don't, Robin, don't! I know I have disappointed you; I know I have disappointed everybody and myself, too, but there was no help for it. It was to be, and therefore it is."

"We used to think that you were meant for better things, Cyr."

"I may have been—but what matter if I missed them. Sometimes I think that if I could start clear again without the ignominy upon me of my birth, I could still struggle out of the brake in which I am entangled; but when I recollect all the hopelessness of getting free of that—when I know how it can foil and disgrace me at every turn—I fold my hands and let myself drift just as chance will. My life is but putting forth fruits natural to the stock. Nay, old Robin, don't look so grieved! Canst thou gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?"

"We had the same chance and carry the same burden, Cyr, only you were so much the cleverer. Do you remember our mother's pride in you? Do you never think of her prayers and good counsels? Do you forget all she taught us in that little old room with the balcony looking over to the sea?"

"I remember her life of saint and martyr, Robin, and that's enough. If I am not utterly abandoned of God and good, it is that her prayers hold me back; and if I am ever to be recovered to the primitive faith which I have lost, it must be from the late growth of some of the seed which she sowed in my heart with such loving hands. Don't reason with me, Robin—don't drown me in a flood of polemics;

you might just as well sow salt upon the sand for any profit argument will bring you; let me be, let me work out my own problems——”

“If I see you working them wrong, Cyr?”

“Yes—if they *are* worked wrong, I shall have them to work over again, that is all. Now let us talk of something else. I told you I was no longer a drone, and promised an explanation. Since my father threatened to withdraw the whole of his allowance, except on a condition to which I shall never accede, it behoves me to find some employment for my head and my hands, which are all the fortune I shall then have left. I have got an engagement on a morning paper, and Sir Philip Nugent is free to execute his threat as soon as he sees fit.” Cyrus told of his success with a little air of triumph.

“You will not withdraw that mischievous book then? Yes, Cyr—it is a mischievous, wicked, foolish book.”

“A truce to it. My new occupation has introduced me to a fresh set of acquaintance, and whom do you think amongst them? Master Scrope, poor old fellow! He absolutely began to cry when he saw me, and we had over a lot of reminiscences of Chinelyn; how intensely I longed to get away from it, and how he encouraged me. I found that he was very badly off, doing odd errands at a printer’s office, so I procured him a place as librarian at a reading-room, debating-club, and lecture hall, to which I should have gone to-night if I had not met you. There is not much to do, and the little there is suits him.”

“What is the amusement to-night?” Robert asked.

“You had better go with me and hear. It has been a rather favorite resort of mine this autumn; one can practice there the art of public speaking. This evening the debating club does not meet, but there is to be a speech from the platform by John Dawson, the great apostle of the people. You have heard of him, of course.”

“Yes; a mischievous, profane demagogue. The men must be blind who elect to themselves such leaders.”

“Dawson is a clever fellow too, and he believes what he preaches, which is less common than many people suppose.”

“You have earned a bad opinion of human kind, Cyr.”

“There, Robin, there! have a little mercy. I thought I had guided you insensibly out of the way of any further moralizing for to-night,” cried Cyrus, impatiently.



"One other question, Cyr, and I have done; that pretty child whom I saw this afternoon, who is she?"

"That pretty child is Laury—call her what else you will. Now, Robert, I have answered your one other question, and I *warn* you not to ask any more." Cyrus looked so angry and stubborn as he made this reply, that Robert was silenced. It was useless to waste what little influence he still possessed over his brother, by a too urgent exercise of it.

They dined together, talking chiefly on indifferent matters, until about a quarter to eight, when they turned out into the street, and wended their way across the silent bridge into the Strand. There was a great crowd thronging the doors of the lecture hall, but passing in with the stream they gained two seats almost in front of the speaker's estrade, and from the time of their entrance the room continued to fill, until it was densely packed to its remotest limits.

#### IV.

It was a dingy room, insufficiently lighted, and it was a motley assembly that filled it. In no other city in the world, perhaps, would you see such a collection of faces—eager, acute, wholesome, sensible, satisfied, credulous—met together for the deliberate purpose of hearing a tirade on grievances, which they would never have discovered without some one to show them how, and of being sent away with the agreeable feeling that they were equally injured and helpless. No doubt there were men there with real troubles and injustices to complain of, but there were by far more inquisitive idlers and restless, discontented ne'er-do-weels; and even they were outnumbered by the superior artizans, to whom something to grumble about is sauce piquant to their daily bread. There was also a sprinkling of such people as Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent, and one wondered naturally what they did there; for, whatever their difficulties, it did not seem likely that they would get any receipt for rectifying them in that place. Robert, in coming in, had caught a glimpse of a tall, stooping, white-haired man, whom he recognised as Master Scrope, but he was so placed that they could not approach to speak to him, for it was almost the moment for the orator to appear, and John Dawson knew the temper of his audience too well to keep them waiting until impatience and de-

lay swallowed up good-humor. Robert Hawthorne, in spite of his prejudice against the man, already felt a curiosity to know the power by which he held these hundreds at the beck of his name; but when he walked up upon the platform in the midst of a tumult of applause, and by the slightest lifting of his hand hushed it to a dead silence, his first sensation was certainly one of disappointment and surprise.

The great apostle of the people was a little man, of a mean and stunted figure, with a head so disproportionately large as to suggest the idea of absolute deformity. His face was pallid, his hair long and grey, his eyes intensely bright, and his mouth mobile and expressive. His utterance was impetuous, but very distinct, and accompanied with rapid and fervent gesticulations; a man of the people whom he addressed, of no education, rash, full of emotion, and blind, wayward, mischievous power; a man who would have won disciples to the wildest creed that was ever promulgated by the very intensity of his faith in it himself.

The feeling he excited in Robert Hawthorne's mind was one of compassion only, but there were thousands to whom every word that dropped from his lips was an oracle. He was listened to in a rapt silence.

"Every great cause has its martyrs," was the opening of his speech; the great cause he had in hand that night being Trades Unions. There was much dissatisfaction in the north of England at this juncture; turns-out amongst the workmen and factory hands, and steady resistance against the masters, which had led to several breaches of the peace, and threatened, if it continued, to produce still more serious popular disturbances. John Dawson handled these events skillfully for the illustration and support of his subject. Let the men band themselves together, he said, and the masters would be powerless either to coerce or resist them; they would cease to be masters, in fact, and become dependants of the unions. Any idea of mutual help was overlooked, and masters and men were spoken of as each other's natural enemies, only driven to make truces by dire necessity. Masters, in becoming such, lost the plain traits of Christian humanity, and grew worse than American slave-drivers; wearing out not only the bodies, but the souls of the people. Warming up to his theme, he drew several unreal pictures of wanton waste in high places, and meek privations hidden

in garrets and cellars amongst the abject poor; he had a touch of pathos in his voice which drew tears from many a stern eye, and a thrill of animosity that sowed hatred in many a breast. To hear him one might have thought that selfishness and vice were the natural companions of the rich, and all the exiled virtues the guardian angels of the poor. As he had begun by speaking of martyrs, so he ended; offering himself as the first amongst the self-sacrificing band, and proclaiming his willingness to be sent as a delegate into the disturbed manufacturing towns of the north, there to preach the gospel of Trades Unions.

"To the popular understanding the speech sounded very fine, fluent, and solid, but it was extremely uncandid and extremely mischievous, as Robert Hawthorne remarked to his brother while they stood waiting until the dispersion of the crowd permitted them to join Master Scrope.

"There was truth in it too. A man might choose a less honorable post for himself than John Dawson has won. It is not only empty words to offer himself as a martyr in the cause of the people; depend upon it, if any of these delegates can be caught in a breach of the law, the prosecution will be very virulent against them," was Cyrus's reply. He looked hot, flushed, and excited, and had evidently been somewhat carried away by the orator's fervency.

"There are enough real sorrows amongst the poor, and, indeed, amongst all classes, without inventing an unnatural feeling of antagonism to aggravate them. Masters and men have their interests so inseparably united that every thing should be done to promote a better understanding between them instead of a wider breach. I think John Dawson a very dangerous fellow; no doubt, he started from some great personal wrong or mischance, and has so magnified it by dwelling upon it in detail that it clouds all the world to his vision; he divides mankind into two great classes—oppressors and oppressed—and fosters nothing so much as strife. He talked a great deal of wicked and frothy nonsense, but I do not believe him to be of the base kind who make a mock at the poor by trading on their sufferings. He seems to have a blind faith in himself, which gives a fallacious weight to every word he utters; but it would be good to hear the other view of the question side by side with his."

"Of course you disapprove of the principle of these Trades Unions?"

"I think they fail of their end. They do not prevent strikes or the destitution and wretchedness they entail; they produce misery which they are almost always powerless to mitigate. And as for their tyranny, no tyranny on earth is like it. They hold each of their members bound hand and foot: they shall not work save for such and such masters, or for wages other than they fix; they shall not admit into their fellowship any man who does not belong to their union, and a recusant they will punish by the cruelest and meanest expedients. It is marvelous to me how men with brains and thews and sinews of the best, can yield their liberty of action to the guidance of other men, as if they were mere items in a great machine."

"Ah! you are a prejudiced witness—you are a *master*," objected Cyrus.

"I and my men are as one; I have nothing to fear from them or they from me. But, Cyr, since when have you made yourself the advocate of popular institutions? It is curious to see you interested in such matters."

"Since I became a working man myself. I wonder how many patriots have been made in the same way; by losing money and friends and self-respect," said Cyrus, with a very bitter laugh.

"Cyr, be honest; do not feign for any cause what you cannot feel," replied Robert, gravely. "It is only the earnest self-abnegation of that mistaken person whom we have just heard, that lifts him above the contempt and detestation of all good men. One who should set himself up as a leader of the wayward and ignorant, with a scorn for them in his heart, and a shallow, flimsy pretence of being their friend, is viler than the vilest crawling thing upon the earth!"

"It is not I who shall ever become such an one, Robin," said Cyrus, in a low, rebuked tone.

Robert made no answer. The throng had now moved from before them, and Master Scrope was slowly making his way between the benches toward the door. The two young men pressed forward, and overtook him just as he was disappearing down the steps into the street. The old man turned round as a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and recognized Cyrus with a smile of pleased intelligence; his other pupil he did not know.

"Who is this, Master Scrope? Look in his face and you

will remember," said Cyrus, stopping his brother under a gas-lamp.

"It is Robert, surely? Yes! He is the taller and broader of the two—I always thought he would be. And how are you, Robert?" He spoke kindly, but not with the same delighted respect as marked his manner to Cyrus. Robert had been a good lad, but not the genius whom he had cherished and revered and ill-advised in the Chinelyn days. Robert was in business now, and Master Scrope did not honor a tradesman, as such, any more than he had formerly honored a boy who did his lessons in a sober and discreet manner, without any originality of either goodness or naughtiness.

"We are close by my rooms, Master Scrope; you shall come in with my brother and me to supper there," Cyrus exclaimed, cheerfully, and as no one gainsaid the proposition, they followed in Indian file up the passage and staircase of an old house, on the first floor of which Cyrus had noisy, but not uncomfortable lodgings.

At the door of the sitting-room a little stiff-haired dog met them, and leaped on Cyrus with short wuffs of welcome; which, however, failed to awaken a young man sleeping in an easy chair with his feet upon a second, at the sight of whom the owner of the room exclaimed—

"Oh! here's Waller. Robert, that fellow has an easy conscience, he sleeps like a baby, doesn't he? Now, Ted wake up;" and he enforced his command by a vigorous shake of the sleeper's shoulder.

"You are come at last, I've been waiting for you two hours, Nugent; I say, can you lend a fellow——"

At this point of his drowsy request, Mr. Waller became conscious of the presence of two individuals beside his friend, and was instantly mute.

"Sit down again, Ted, while I send out for supper, and after that we will discuss the supplies; this is my brother, and this other you know—the learned and venerable Dr. Scrope."

So was the old pedagogue named by the young men who frequented the library he had in charge.

Mr. Waller bowed to Robert with great solemnity, profoundly astonished to find that Cyrus possessed such a brother, and nodded familiarly to Master Scrope. He was a young man who was at home everywhere and in all com-

panies—a journalist with a little information on every subject under the sun, a discreet solidity of appearance, and a very large share of natural tact. Within five minutes Robert had forgotten the sleepy, waking speech which had revealed the unthrift of Cyrus's visitor, and was disposed to think him a man of sense, stability, and remarkable intelligence. Mr. Waller, like that busy bee in the hymn, was always ready to improve the shining hour; and finding that Robert had an accurate and thoughtful knowledge of those vexed questions which were agitating the north at that time, he carefully culled his opinions, and afterward wrought them up into a leader which was quoted as a luminous and exhaustive view of the subject by half the minor papers in the kingdom. Mr. Waller was delighted with Robert; himself a cultivated person, remarkable for nothing so much as his want of faith in every thing, he declared that he found it most refreshing to converse with a creature so guileless, large-hearted, and sincere as this independent country tradesman; and as he regulated his own talk to match Robert's orthodox sentiments, their favorable opinion of each other was mutually flattering.

Master Scrope was the same amiable philosopher and genial prophet as of old. It did not take him long to discover how deep was Robert Hawthorne's disappointment in Cyrus, and he immediately gave himself to the task of encouraging a better hope for the future.

"He's but a boy yet," said he, indulgently; "you must give him time. Depend upon it, we shall still be proud of him—still hear of him."

"Hear of him! but how?" replied Robert. "Rather the humblest obscurity than such notoriety as he is making for himself now."

Master Scrope could not agree with his ancient scholar, so he refrained from saying any thing.

Cyrus and Mr. Waller, toward the end of the supper, began to discuss communism of property, for argument's sake Cyrus being *for* and Mr. Waller *against* it. The subject was one that Robert in his old-fashioned loyalty considered even dangerous to speak of, and he listened with real uneasiness to the earnest power Cyrus chose to put into it, being sensibly relieved when Mr. Waller, perceiving his annoyance, turned it all into a jest.

"Well," cried the journalist, cheerfully, "I love money,

and when I have got it I can spend it like a prince; but as I did not inherit any, and cannot earn much, I do not still see that I have a claim on my neighbor's purse. The principle of communism is simply the old saw in masquerade, 'That they should take who have the power, and they should keep who cap.'"

"The vast inequality between rich and poor is, I maintain, only the overgrowth of a corrupt civilization," replied Cyrus. "In primitive forms of society such inequality, which is against the laws of nature, never existed."

"It must always have existed, unless modern men are made on a new principle. To some of us, riches flow as by a natural attraction, and stick as fast as the needle to the magnet; from others they fly off by a natural repulsion, which many of us are in a condition satisfactorily to explain. Now you two brothers come as an apt illustration of my theory: if you had started fair a dozen years ago, each with half a crown in his pocket, I would have undertaken to predict that Mr. Hawthorne might die Lord Mayor of London; while you, O Cyrus, my friend, might have perished in the union workhouse, and have been buried by contract!"

"No, no, no," remonstrated Master Scrope, with an affectionate look at his old favorite, "I would have promised him Westminster Abbey—Westminster Abbey, and a column or two in the Valhalla of great men, the biographical dictionary."

Every body laughed, for the old school-master spoke with a sincere gravity of Cyrus's being thus doubly entombed, and evidently thought the dictionary a monument of eternal glory.

"The union workhouse and Westminster Abbey, and the Valhalla of biographical dictionaries are all next door to each other," said Cyrus, cheerfully. "But if I were a poet of distinction like one or two we could name, and my admiring countrymen left me to die of poverty and then proposed to glorify themselves by erecting a fine monument to my memory, I hope my indignant ghost would rise and pelt them with the stones."

"Calm thyself, my friend!" exclaimed Mr. Waller, laughing; "you are not great man enough to serve as a commercial speculation to a people ever desirous of turning an honest penny—your bones will rest in peace."

Cyrus colored, and turned the conversation—perhaps it

mortified him to hear himself estimated as below any for any purpose!

Robert Hawthorne was the first to move, and his brother would accompany him to his hotel; Mr. Waller also, with a cigar in his mouth, walked off to his chambers, after first assuring his new acquaintance of the pleasure he had derived from his company in a formal manner which Cyrus knew concealed a secret mockery; Robert responded in perfect good faith, and he afterward told his brother that it consoled him to find he had one seriously disposed friend to advise with in all his difficulties.

Master Scrope had Robert's arm as far as they went together, and he took this opportunity of telling him several pleasant and generous traits in Cyrus's conduct, especially as regarded himself.

"He may have his faults, but I don't see them," said the old man, feelingly; "I believe he has had more to bear than we know; but think of his taking me by the hand as if I were his equal, when I assure you, Robert, I did not know on what side to turn to win the morrow's crust. For six weeks he kept me in his own lodgings, and supplied me with every thing; and I believe he would have kept me for six months or six years if it had been necessary; but this place fell vacant at the library, and he had interest enough to procure it for me. Then his hand is always open to his friend in need—he has a generous spirit, and I should be worse than a dog if I were not grateful to him. The very beggars in the street ask of him more confidently than of others—I see you are sad about him, and I would have you take courage."

Cyrus was walking off the pavement whistling a popular air as carelessly as a school-boy, with his little dog Beau trotting close at his heel. He did not hear Master Scrope's plea for himself, and interrupted it once or twice with observations on objects they met in the street.

"His worst faults are not on the surface, Master Scrope," replied Robert; "the most painful of those that are, is the light indifference with which he looks on everything. He reminds me of the sparkling sand on Chinelyn beach, where I have seen him trace fine words out of books many a time, but which lost all impression of them at the rising of the next tide. This melancholy book that he has written is the fruit rather of perversity and vanity than of any deep sentiment or study."



"I cannot agree with you there, Robert; the book is full of original thought, and is eminently suggestive."

"Then the light has not reached *you* yet, Master Scrope?" Robert said, gravely.

"Well, sir, according to your views and Mr. Ford's, it has not. The almond-tree is in full blossom, and I have had repeated warning that the tale of my years is nearly accomplished, but I have not seen reason to change any of my old ways of thinking; my belief is that I shall die as I have lived."

"Dr. Scrope, we are at the door of your lodging, don't come out of the way," exclaimed Cyrus; "good night to you."

"Good night." And they parted with the old man there.

Cyrus would not go in with his brother when they reached the hotel, but he promised to see him the next day—on condition, as he said laughing, that he should not be reasoned with. Robert would not give any promise, and his brother marched away home again very cheerfully, thinking what a dear, innocent, guileless, faithful creature Robert was, much as his lively friend Mr. Waller had done before him; but, of course, immeasurably inferior to himself in experience, and quite unable to judge of the snares and difficulties that beset the thoughtful way of sovereign intellects.

## V.

Robert Hawthorne waited until noon of the following day, and his brother not appearing according to his promise, he went off to seek him at his rooms in the Strand. Mounting the stairs alone, he heard Cyrus's voice raised in loud and angry contention to which another voice replied in tones equally indignant. He knocked twice or thrice before he was heard, but at length Cyrus opened the door himself. As soon as he saw who it was he became suddenly calm; "I thought it was you, Robin, come in," said he; and advancing a step or two, Robert saw Sir Philip Nugent seated by the table, looking white and excited, with every trace of a vehement and painful discussion upon his countenance.

Robert would have gladly retreated, but Sir Philip held out his hand and rose, saying,

"I am glad to see you, Robert; you come at the right

moment to help me to reason with this wilful and misguided son of mine."

"Robert is wiser than to waste words," returned Cyrus. "I told him last night that my mind was made up, and that I would neither be bribed nor coerced into suppressing the book—that is our present quarrel, Robert."

"I regret quite as much as any one can do that it was ever written," said Robert, "but still more do I regret the condition of feeling and principle that made it possible. I should be thankful if Cyrus would only give the subject of it longer and honester reflection, for false and mischievous as it is, it is crude, weak and watery."

"I am of that opinion, too," cried Sir Philip eagerly. "It is a discreditable performance for its manner as well as its matter."

Cyrus bit his lip, and glanced from the one to the other suspiciously.

"It may serve your interest to keep me obscure," said he, "but I have begun to make my own way at last, and will not be stopped. You may take away your money, Sir Philip Nugent, but I defy you to keep me down! It would have been better if I had been left from the first to strike for independence in my own way. I have always felt hampered by the secret jealousy and antagonism there has been between us, and shall work better when I am no longer a crouching dependent."

"I don't know what you mean by jealousy and antagonism, Cyrus, but of this I am sure, you are wrongheaded and ungrateful to excess," exclaimed Sir Philip.

"Dependents are always ungrateful when they decline to become slaves," retorted Cyrus.

Sir Philip looked deeply incensed; he rose and walked about the room for several minutes, fuming silently.

"You will come to your senses by and bye," said he, at length; "for the praise of fools will not wait long on your vapid effusions. But remember this, I will not have *my* name paraded on the title-page! Call yourself by the only one that belongs to you if you are determined to attach to yourself the notoriety of an atheistical scribbler!"

Cyrus grew livid.

"Very well," replied he, with an intense calmness; "henceforward I am Cyrus Hawthorne *only*, free to hate Sir Philip Nugent as the enemy who, having done me one deadly and

irretrievable wrong, can taunt me with it to my face and yet be safe! If you were any other man but what you are, I would murder you where you stand!" The whole devil of his nature glared in his distended eyes as he significantly touched with one forefinger a little sharp-pointed glittering dagger which hung amongst a collection of curious pipes above the chimney-piece. Robert gravely took him by the arm and held him back, for while speaking he had thrust his angry visage close to his father's, and there was menace enough in his eyes to startle the bravest. Sir Philip, however, looked in no wise cowed, and merely replied,

"Tut, tut—what are these tragedy airs?" with a quiet raillery which was more stinging than the loudest rebuke.

"There can be no profit in continuing this scene, Sir Philip Nugent—perhaps you will leave Cyrus to me?" said Robert.

Sir Philip Nugent paused a minute or two irresolute, then turned on his heel and walked toward the door.

"If you repent of your present determination, Cyrus, I am as much your friend as ever," said he, before going out. "I will not be alienated by your vain petulance, but until I hear from you in a different strain from that you have taken to-day, make no claim upon me or any belonging to me for help, because it will not be given." With these final words he disappeared.

For some time after he was gone the brothers were silent; Robert was more grieved than any words could express.

"He has taken his measures to drive me to extremity shrewdly, but he will not succeed," Cyrus said, after a while. "To-morrow I should have drawn my quarter's allowance and have been above water three months longer, but now to work in earnest! I must see Waller to-day."

There was a burning restlessness and impatience in his speech and manner which testified to the anxious cares which had beset him as in a moment. He had thought the matter over again and again, and though to his ideas there was a certain nobleness in forfeiting his father's bounty for the reason set forth, he never attempted to conceal from himself that the struggles of Cyrus Hawthorne and Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent would have to be fought on very different stages.

"I cannot aid you as Sir Philip has done, but I can keep you far above need if you will be prudent, Cyr," replied Robert. "But do, *do* turn your mind from the evil bias it

has got, and take up healthier studies. They will help to obliterate the stamp of the other. I have hope of you, dear Cyr, if you will but be sincere and earnest."

"No more of that now, Robin, if you love me. I am chafed already past endurance. I am going to send you away and get about a piece of work which Sir Philip's fiat precipitates. You may come and seek me here again to-night."

Robert thought that a little quiet reflection might be as good for him now as anything, and was going off with a promise to return about seven o'clock when Cyrus cried after him—

"You have not said good-bye, old fellow; shake hands and say 'good-bye!'"

Robert complied, repeating, however, that they should see each other again very soon.

"Yes, yes; and mind whatever you hear of me, *you* always try to think the best, Robin," Cyr added.

"Surely I will; at seven o'clock, remember," and Robert went his way.

Returning in the evening at the hour appointed, however, the woman of the house told him that his brother had left almost immediately after himself, taking away all his possessions in a street cab, and paying up his rent to the end of the month. He had left no directions as to where he was going. In the greatest heat and anxiety Robert set off for the cottage in the suburbs; that he also found vacated, save by the female in charge. She could give him no information, except that the young woman whom he had seen the day before had received a letter during the afternoon over which she had cried a great deal, but that, cheering up presently, she had gone out with a friend who came to see her and had not since returned. Robert understood that it was his brother's intention to secrete himself from him, and with a bitter sigh over the distrust this implied, he went back to his hotel and prepared for his return into the country on the morrow. The morning's post brought him a letter, undated, but bearing his brother's signature, in which he explained the reasons for his departure, and concluded by saying, "and do not expect to hear of me or to see me any more, dear Robin, until my name ceases to be an anxiety and a disgrace."

## CHAPTER THE NINTH.

## A FLOWER OF THE LATTER SUMMER.

"FAIR Sylvia, cease to blame my youth  
For having loved before;  
For men, till they have learn'd the truth,  
Strange deities adore."

BISHOP ATTERBURY.

## I.

CYRUS HAWTHORNE withdrew himself from all connection with his kinsfolk and old friends in a paroxysm of angry pride; he had reason soon to repent it, but such a step is more easily taken than retraced. He did not discover that any very ardent research was made after him, and was no doubt a little mortified that every body seemed to acquiesce so readily in his claim to think and act with perfect independence. His was a nature that especially craved for some other, stronger and more stable, to rely upon; some other that would bear his vagaries affectionately, and in the midst of them still believe in him at his best. When all was sunshine and prosperity, it was sufficient for him to know there was such a support waiting only to be claimed though it were hundreds of miles away; but as soon as he had voluntarily flung it away and declared himself capable of dispensing with it, he felt the lack of it extremely. After a few months of the indifferent acquaintanceship of those with whom mutual pursuits brought him into contact, he began to experience fits of disgust at the selfishness of the world, and to write very pretty little moral essays on the vanity of human hopes. He missed Robert's affectionate and didactic epistles, and would, in his chilled and dismal moods, have felt infinitely refreshed by the sight of one of his large-folded blue sheets of letter paper, lying by his breakfast-cup of a morning; but though he knew that a single word of his whereabouts would reopen that wholesome source of interest

his tenacious pride withheld him from uttering it; he preferred rather to retire within himself, to grumble at his uneven lot, and to dream dreams of being lifted into fame and fortune by some lucky production of his pen, when he would hold up his head and permit his own people and all the world to honor him. But that pleasant epoch was rather long a-coming.

He worked, but in an irregular and careless fashion; neither was he to be depended on in other respects beside punctuality. His habits of thought were as desultory as his habits of life, and he despised the drudgery by which he earned his bread. He might, however, have got on better if he had not alienated Mr. Waller, who was once much disposed to befriend him. Mr. Waller was the editor of a morning paper, and he gave Cyrus, who had always the pen of a ready writer when he could be caught for the space of one hour and nailed to a desk, an engagement on its staff. Cyrus liked his duties very well at first, but he presently took umbrage at some criticism from his chief, and in a luminous moment hit upon the following mischievous revenge. There was at the time a lively newspaper controversy going on upon a certain political topic which greatly interested the public mind, and in writing a leader late one night which was to appear the next morning, he bethought him of what fun it would be to take the line of argument diametrically opposed to the principles the journal espoused. He did it, was satisfied with its clear and logical sentences, saw it in proof, corrected it, and then laughed his way home, exulting in the chance absence of the chief, and picturing to himself the astonishment and dismay of Mr. Waller when he should see how his paper had been made so dexterously to fight the fight of its antagonists. Cyrus gained half a day's amusement thereby, he made one enemy, lost a dozen useful friends, startled a few thousand regular subscribers, and made his best wishers shy of trusting him; but Cyrus never, in his life, was given to counting the cost before he took his little indulgences.

After this escapade, losing his regular engagement, he became straitened in many ways. He had not yet found the perseverance even to proceed on the tack of those dangerous subjects which had before brought him some notoriety. His articles were acceptable in many quarters, but the mischief was that no review, magazine or journal could ever

rely on his consistently uttering the same tone of politics twice together. Not having any convictions in particular, he was always open to the whim or the argument of the moment, and never dreamed of binding himself not to follow it.

Once he was arrested at the suit of his tailor, and remained about six weeks lost to society; and after his reappearance there crept into being a second volume of verse, of which Mr. Waller had the pleasure of remarking in his widely circulated columns that it bore the same affinity to true poetry as fireworks bear to the effulgence of the sun. Another kindly critic, following the same style of illustration, observed that in his first book of poems Mr. Cyrus Hawthorne had gone up like a rocket, and in his present one he came down like the stick. There were a few personalities added which set the author's face on fire: Cyrus had helped to make and mar literary reputations himself, but he winced like any novice when the lash was applied to himself.

The critics notwithstanding, the little book sold. Young Lady Nugent bought a copy and read it, and amongst the best of the sonnets she recognised some old friends; nobody else could have so recognised them, but she did not let the volume lie about in her boudoir or her drawing-room—probably because there were some pieces far from orthodox both in their morality and their theology, intermixed with the purer effusions which were quite as well out of the way. Lady Leigh and Lady Nugent bought it also; they said it contained about three real gems in a casket full of tinselly rubbish; it was known in Maiden Lane, too, and sorrowfully disapproved there. On the whole it was not a success. Cyrus had yet to write the book that was to crown him with the bays of immortality.

## II.

One pleasant August evening, when he was rather sick of every thing, himself included, he took a row down the river as far as Chelsea, and landing there walked about the fields and green lanes as dismally as ever did poet in this critical world. In vain was the grass emerald, in vain was the air balmy, in vain the birds sang vespers in every bush and hedge—his miserable sulkiness blackened and dulled every thing; he was prepared to sympathize with the people who

commit suicide; he was just in the state of mind when, life being in no danger, men don't hold it at "a pin's fee."

Returning toward the place where he had left the boat, he had to pass down a pretty lane the high hedges of which secluded several cottages standing singly within bright flowery gardens. He was walking languidly and wearily, when all at once he heard a voice cry out, "Cyrus! oh, Cyrus Hawthorne!" and, looking to the flower-garlanded upper window of the house he had just passed, he saw the flushed brunette face of little Lola looking down upon him.

He had not felt such a sensation of pleasure for months! Here was some body who loved him—who believed in him with all the might of her innocent heart—who did not know his difficulties, his wounds of pride, or the way in which the remorseless critics had mangled his poetry-book. He turned back immediately, his dreary vexations taking sudden flight, and met Lola at the doorstep almost as warmly and enthusiastically as she met him. Every month now added to Lola's beauty, but she was still too much of a child to be troubled with any reserves; and after telling Cyrus how delighted she was, and expressing her welcome in the manner that came most natural to her, she would bring him up stairs to make the acquaintance of her uncle and aunt.

Cyrus found the said aunt to be a pleasant, florid, middle-aged Englishwoman, whose folly had united her late in life, along with a moderate fortune, to a rather sinister-looking foreigner, who was, in fact, Lola's nearest blood relation. The marriage was quite recent, and already the child had begun to experience the exceeding comfort of having a friend betwixt her and her kinsman.

Her uncle was a distinguished musical professor, and had bound Lola to himself for five years to educate and to profit by her engagements during that period. Already she had put money in his purse by singing at several private concerts, and but for the judicious counsel of her aunt he would have even produced her in public. Lady Leigh's early training had given her some quiet feminine tastes without the child herself being well aware of it; she had not found herself happy amongst her artistic tribe of relatives in Paris, and when her uncle Manuel proposed to take the entire charge of her, and to bring her to England, she acceded eagerly. A few months of discomfort, as bad or worse than the Arab life in Paris, ensued; when fortunately for both, Señor Man-



uel obtained an aristocratic pupil who introduced him to more and more again, until his time was full of the most remunerative teaching. He also got engagements at fashionable concerts, and finally he won his comfortable English wife, with her comfortable fortune, who took care of the house, of the child, and of himself in the kindest way in the world, and, apparently, the most self-denying, for it was a wonder to every one who saw them what they could possibly have in common.

The Señor looked sharply at Cyrus, and was not very cordial in his reception, until it dropped out by some of Lola's questions that he was a poet, a journalist, a man who had to do with reviews and newspapers, when his tone was instantly ameliorated; the Señor was not of such fame as to be independent of criticism, or of such vain mind as to be indifferent to it. While he stayed he had the conversation to himself, but he was presently summoned away to an interview with a musical compatriot, and then his wife and Lola seemed unrestrained and happy.

"If Lola is to make any sensation, she must reserve herself and study hard for four years to come," said the respectable aunt. "Juvenile prodigies always result in a most disappointing mediocrity."

"Don't I work hard?" responded Lola. "It is from morning until night that I work."

"You are a good girl; I only object to your uncle Manuel pushing you forward so early. If you have time given you to reflect, I am in hopes that you will change your mind and give up the idea of being an actress, which is very repugnant to all my notions of what is suitable in women. The domestic life is our sphere."

Lola pouted her ruby lips for a moment, and then ran to her sober English relative and inflicted half a dozen impetuous kisses upon her round and rosy visage.

"You are very dear and good!" cried she; "and I love you, but you know I am half a gipsy."

"My dear child, take away your arms; you are rumpling my collar," was the composed reply.

"Do you like apricots, Cyrus?" asked Lola, suddenly. "There are some ripe on the wall; come away and eat some, and I will show you our garden."

The garden was not very extensive or very beautiful, but there were some showy flowers and plenty of fruit, of which

Lola gathered and ate quantities, offering the finest to Cyrus, who, because it pleased her, let her do as she liked with him, even to feeding him, like a bird, with the few deliciously sweet red currants which had been left under the leaves when the gathering of the first harvest was over.

"Do you remember my picking currants for you ever like this before? I did once at Hadley Royal," said she, holding a ruby cluster about two inches from his lips and withdrawing them when he approached.

"That is unkind, Lola; I am thirsty, and I remember nothing about Hadley Royal at this moment," replied he, putting out a hand to catch hers. She sprang away laughing, and stood a little distance off, looking so bright, free, and innocent that she was almost beautiful. Cyrus regarded her with more respect and tenderness than he had regarded any of her sex for a long time. "Don't be provoking, Lola," said he, pathetically; "if I was not to have the currants, why did you tempt me with them?"

She hovered about not quite sure of his being really regretful, until drawing unwarily near he seized her hand, and took possession of the fruit. He held it fast two or three minutes, and then, cooling down from the momentary vivacity of his capture, he began to say, very seriously, "Lola, why were you so glad to see me to-night?"

"Because I love you," was the unhesitating reply.

"As much as ever?"

A nod of the head implying "Yes," accompanied by a very reproachful look from Lola.

"If I am quite poor and unsuccessful, and have lost all my friends?" suggested Cyrus, flushing painfully.

"Cyrus, what do you mean?" said the child, creeping closer to him, and perusing his agitated face with softly solemn eyes.

"What I say, Lola. I am poor, very—and nobody cares for me any more. I live in an ugly street and wear an old coat, I am more often dismal than gay, and so I ask if you love me as much as ever."

"Cyrus, I love you more." The little voice was full of sorrowful earnestness, the great dark eyes swam in tears.

"Then you shall be my sister and friend—my best little friend and adviser."

Cyrus Hawthorne's first impulse of gladness at seeing Lola had been because she knew none of his recent dis-

tresses, but at the very first touch of that true sympathy for which he had always the craving of necessity, his heart was opened to her. It was an intense relief to talk of himself, his wrongs, disappointments, and vexations, to one who felt every grievance just as he felt it, and did not endeavor to reason him into submission or respond with the civil indifference of boredom. Lola was the most patient and gentle of listeners, and a single word of thankfulness at the end repaid her a hundredfold. I think in her secret heart she did not feel very sad that Cyrus was no longer the handsome and brilliant young prince of former days, since she was still only un-fairly-visited Cinderella. Her manner underwent a signal and rapid change, and when he paused to claim a word of comfort, she said, "Oh, Cyrus, I like you to trust me!" with an affectionate softness, that was very touching. They had changed places, and, for the moment, she was the elder, the stronger, the counsellor.

"Good little soul! I believe you are better worth trusting than any of them!" replied he, sincerely.

"But you did not love me as well, Cyrus."

"I love you better now, a great deal—I prize you more. You are like the last rose-bud we find on the trees in November, when all the rest of the garden is bare."

Lola sighed at the poverty of the simile, and looked up from her own thin, brown hands into Cyrus's face.

"And when you are not happy you will always come and tell me; promise me you will."

She did not think of asking to share his pleasant seasons; she felt intuitively that she was rather to be made use of as consolation in troublous times than as a real every-day friend, sharing the sunshine as well as the shower; but, as some essentially feminine natures do, she was more contented with this humble office near one she loved than none.

"Only too glad to come, Lola," replied he. "Little friend, your sympathy is very precious to me!" And truly at the moment it was. He felt as if he had put off upon some other shoulders one-half of the weight that had oppressed him. They did not talk upon any other theme all the while they were together; and when he said, by and bye, that he must go, he added—not any kind or thoughtful sentiment for her, but—"When I am weary and thirsty, I shall come and draw refreshment out of the pure well of your affectionate little

heart, Lola. The sight of you has revived me to-night, as a clear spring revives a traveler in a desert."

Lola felt quite pleased, happy, and grateful, that he had deigned to rest and renew his strength beside her. A year or two hence she might perhaps become more sensitive to his quiet, unconscious, selfish preference of himself to every other, as if those that loved him were created for no other purpose than that of ministering to his requirements. Cyrus did not feel that he was selfish; he went away much lighter of heart and mind, thinking that he had done a kind deed and made a little thing who loved him happy.

### III.

The dark days of his fortunes continuing for some time, he was frequent in his visits to the cottage at Chelsea. He was welcome to the señor, he was more welcome to the friendly English wife, and he was most welcome to Lola. The child's grace and beauty grew with her happiness, until Cyrus sometimes glanced at her in wonderment, and said to himself, "A few years hence and this will be a beautiful woman." He one day told her so, after he had made her pout by designating her the nut-brown maid, the gipsy, the russet-pippin, and other uncomplimentary names, and was surprised to see with what an acuteness of pleasure she heard it.

"I am glad. Oh, I should like to be beautiful!" cried she, naïvely; "but do you think any one *can* be beautiful who is not fair?"

"Vain little *mignon*, you seek compliments—I shall not tell you," was his tantalizing answer.

"Lola's countenance fell; she liked any mood of his better than the one in which he laughed at her. Cyrus saw she was teased, and pursued his amusement until there was an ominous glitter in her eyes, and her lips trembled; then he caressed her, called her a foolish child, and vowed that whatever he might have done when he was younger, he liked a sunny brown face *now* better than the fairest of lilies and roses.

"I don't believe you!" said Lola, pettishly, turning away.

Cyrus deprecated her displeasure, and coaxed her back into good humor. The rôles of sister, friend, and best ad-

viser were sometimes dropped, and they played at being lovers—that is, Cyrus did—the child was only a child to him, counting by her years, but he liked to tease her when he was idly disposed, and to watch the sudden gloom and sunshine of her face. But for all this, which was mischief and not malice, she had an influence upon him—a purifying influence such as only a fresh-hearted girl, full of enthusiasm, could have. He woke up to a profound reverence for her unsuspecting innocence, and occasionally to a thoroughly ashamed recollection of certain passages in his life which made him quite unworthy of so much credulous devotion as it was her highest happiness to lavish upon him. Not that such right feelings were permanent; far from it. Sinners have always handsome pleas at command for their own sins, and Cyrus was quite an adept in the science of plausible excuses.

But it is not agreeable, except to the most hardened, to have a pair of beautiful, earnest, believing eyes turned upon you, while a clear little voice questions you about your high and mighty aspirations, and protests that you have done, are doing, and will do great deeds; you being all the time conscious of a bathos of insignificance in your past, profound hypocrisy in your present, and very faint glimmerings of nobler things in your future. This was Cyrus Hawthorne's position often, and some impulse within him, which was not altogether falsity, prevented him from undeceiving her. She wanted his book of poetry which, not unnaturally, he at first declined to give her; but, as she was urgent in her entreaties, he got some unbound sheets from the printer, made a careful selection from the pieces, had it prettily bound, and presented it to her. Lola said it was a very little book, otherwise she liked it very much. Also she would have liked to read the volume which had caused the difference between himself and his father, but he told her it was not a little girl's book, and she could not understand it if she had it, but if she would have patience he would write her a pretty tale, which he did with more successful results than had attended either his poetry or his theology. Lola and her aunt cried sadly over the pathetic parts, and the young man took heart from this casual gleam of success, and turned to work after it with something like courage. A few words of praise were more wholesome and needful to one of his temper than pages of critical abuse.

## IV.

But when the sun shone on Cyrus in London, it did not shine so often on the garden at Chelsea; that is the young man found less need to come down there to be cheered and worshipped when he had his sufficient ties elsewhere. As he had once helped Master Scrope, so Master Scrope at length had the opportunity of helping him, and by a word in the right quarter, it came to pass that he had offered to him the direction and editorship of a people's paper, which he at once accepted. He did it very satisfactorily, and contributed a large amount of the matter himself, which, as it was smart and clever, improved the circulation of the paper very considerably. But he used sometimes to be enraged at himself for having espoused principles which in his heart he hated, and on one occasion, indulging in a violent self-condemnation to Lola, she said to him, almost in the words his brother Robert had used to him already.

"Oh, Cyrus, be honest; it is wrong and cruel to pretend to feel for the poor and the working folks what you don't feel; you will do them far more harm than good."

Then he told her that he was not sure that his *sympathies* were against them, though his *prejudices* were, and reasoned both her and himself into the idea that he ought not, on a sudden impulse of feeling, to throw away his living. "Necessity," he said to himself, "reduced men to undertake many tasks repugnant to their tastes," and this excused him to himself for any thing that was wrong in his present office. He had become acquainted with John Dawson and other persons of his kind, very different from himself in education and externals, but sincere in their advocacy of their principles. John Dawson took a strong liking to Cyrus. The circumstances of his life, which the young man was not long in confiding to him, were of a kind to interest him extremely, for he detested the great in station as if each one was a personal enemy of the down-trodden poor, and every history that told against them was as a fresh weapon in his arsenal.

In proportion as Cyrus was interested and busy, he forgot his little friend, and sometimes whole weeks went by and even months that she never saw him; very dreary weeks, very tedious months to Lola, in the midst of her hard practicing under Uncle Manuel. Once he failed to come down

to Chelsea for fourteen weeks, and when he suddenly appeared, looking gay and smiling, the little thing followed up her welcome with a shower of tears.

"Oh, Cyrus! if it were not selfish, I should wish you as you were when first I saw you here!" said she, sorrowfully; "I should wish you were living in the ugly street again, and wearing an old coat with nobody to love you but me."

"Have you missed me? I have been busy; I have been doing a thousand things, but I never forgot little Lola."

Lola was too happy to believe him. "Don't mind me if I seemed jealous," said she; "but I often thought you had given me up."

"You must remember, Lola, you were my little sweetheart when you were six years old, and we always return to our first love, the proverb says;" he was half laughing and half flattered: "you may be sure that I shall come back to you for ever."

Lola looked up and caught the faithless smile in his eyes. "You are mocking me," said she, indignantly, "I know; I saw you cruel to Félicie, and you broke her heart!"

"My little friend!" replied Cyrus, in a tone of remonstrating gravity, while a flush of color passed over his face and left him very pale.

"Forgive me!" whispered Lola, with quick repentance; "forgive me, Cyrus."

It was not very difficult to do; and then they went indoors and talked to the respectable, kind aunt until it was time to part.

"When will you come again, Cyrus?" Lola asked as he was leaving her.

"Soon—I have had a smooth time lately, and as trouble never leaves me long alone, I am sure to need my little consolers by and bye," was his laughing answer. The child looked up at him with wistful reproach, and let him go with his careless "good night," as if they were to meet on the morrow. The unopened bud, the last of the summer, which he professed to prize, knew what it was to shiver in the frost of his idle slights.

"I wonder," thought Lola, in her childish pain, "whether he ever *will* be glad to come to me—nobody loves him so well—nobody believes in him more sincerely—but it seems to me to-night as if I were never, *never*, to see him any more."

And the presentiment had reason in it, Lola—the veil dropped down over both of you there by the cottage garden-gate; the gay, careless Cyrus died to you as he went out of sight waving his hand at the corner of the lane; and the child Lola died to him in the glance of mournful reproach from which he turned away with his cheerful “good night.”

The latter summer ended that night, and the flower of it faded, as the flowers fade from each season of our lives without our well noting it until they are gone, and then we are too busy gathering in our fruit much to heed the loss.



## PART THIRD.



### *Storm Winds.*

"**THEN** in life's goblet freely press  
The leaves that give it bitterness,  
Nor prize the colored waters less,  
For in thy darkness and distress  
New light and strength they give!

"And he who has not learned to know  
How false its sparkling bubbles show,  
How bitter are the drops of woe  
With which its brim may overflow,  
He has not learned to live."  
**LONGFELLOW.**



## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

### HOME.

"The cares that infest the day  
Fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And silently steal away."  
LONGFELLOW.

### I.

THERE was not a happier household in all Walton Minster than that of Robert Hawthorne and his dear wife; it was happy and quiet enough to give some reason to that old saw which often has but very little—"Marriages are made in heaven."

The childlike simplicity of Lilian's character remained still the same attaching power as formerly. It prevailed with every one alike. She was always to be *loved* above everything. It never occurred to any person to say that they looked up to her, or respected her, or esteemed her, but her name would be accompanied by some endearing word which had the meaning of a caress. To Robert she was the sunshine and pleasantness of life, the sweet and sufficient complement of his own grave and quiet disposition: even her little petulances and feigned perversities were only trifles to be coaxed away with kisses; clouds light as air, which were a beauty and caprice like the fleecy vapors running across a summer sky. Yet I would not have it thought that she was weak or trivial; sound brain, pure mind, loving heart, gentle spirit, guided and pervaded her life. She had drawn a good lot, a very happy lot, and her maturity was as the mature perfection of some sweet-scented flower, such as all delight to admire, to set in their garden, or to wear in the bosom. There may be a more magnificent grace in the fine scarlet camelia, a wilder charm in the passion-flower flinging its tendrils on the burning air, a more pungent attraction in the thorny briar even, for some imaginations (I mean in the types of womanhood,

answering to these emblems); but the modest loveliness, the tender perfume, the simple purity of the white lily amongst its veiling leaves will win the more constant and grateful devotion. Robert Hawthorne's Lilian was this lily.

In their home there were the means and the taste for all essential refinements; not wealth, but competence; not learning, but fancies and preferences for certain books and certain authors which, in the long winter evenings, Robert read aloud while Lilian sewed; and if the last half hour of this reading was accomplished with Lilian perched on Robert's knee, her arm round his neck, and her soft cheek very close to his, I don't think either book or author lost by the arrangement.

"I like a song that sings in my ears all the day after I have heard it," Lilian would say; and though Robert, for his part, preferred a solid, even a dull book, he continually found and brought home from the bookseller in the market-place a little volume of verse or a story-book, in which the ever-new old parables of human love and human sorrow were recounted again and again, with a difference only in the setting. Robert was rather inclined on principle to disapprove of these fictitious histories, but Lilian had a genuine delight in them. Women, like children, without being either ignorant or silly, mostly love a tale. Furnish them with a bulky history, a philosophical treatise, and in eight cases out of ten the present result to their minds will be a fog of words, words, words, and the after effect a confused hum of bewildering dullness. But a tale in which they listen to their own thoughts made vocal; where they see love, and patience, and sorrow striving in the battlefield of life; where they see men, women, and little children acting and failing, hoping, fearing, and weeping as the world does around them—is a lesson and an encouragement as well as a pleasure. They can forgive, nay they can *relish*, a prolix minuteness of detail, they can be blind to defects of style and occasional grammatical lapses, for the sake of the pretty fable that sounds so real and sings in their hearts through the long household hours when their menfolk are away in the office or the workshop or where not.

Lilian was a discriminating little critic amongst her favorites. She never perversely blamed a story for not being something else, but took it for what it was with more or less approval. Sometimes, when unusually charmed with a tale,

she would carry it to Dorothea Sancton to read, and be quite disappointed to find her of a totally different opinion. There are diverse complexions of readers as well as of writers, and perhaps no book was ever yet put forth so feeble or so inane but that it found some one to like it. Neither have story-books all the folly to themselves, as the supercilious critical contempt that is expended on them might lead the unobservant to suppose. Are there no pretentious philosophical works which have become as very sloughs of despond to those who adventured themselves therein? no soporific histories dulling men's wits? no partizan histories misleading men's judgment? no wooden lay-figure biographies without a breath of informing spirit? no tours of travelers traveling in the leading-strings of guide-books? no lumbering theologians who lose sight of God in a storm of controversy where cross-winds of doctrine and the thick haze of misty self-delusion are enough to confound the elect themselves? I think there are all these; mere puzzle-brains and shelf-cumberers, neither wiser, wittier, nor worthier than the weak little wild-flower stories whose life is of a day, and who die willingly when their brief task of embellishment is over.

Have you read Mrs. Inchbald's "Simple Story?" Its style may sound rather old-fashioned now, but there is the touch of nature in it that made Lilian laugh and cry over its pages, and remember Matilda and Doriforth ever after as distinctly as if she had known them in the flesh. She made personal friends in the tales she read; and often, sitting alone when Robert was attending to his business, she would weave new adventures for them; carry the lovers, who were happily married in the last chapter, through the deep cares of later life; give them children, give them sorrows, give them losses, trials of love and trials of endurance, all tending to good issues; for Lilian's favorite heroes and heroines were all noble, self-denying, loving and beloved; almost too pure and excellent for a world in whose finest gold there is always a measure of alloy.

In this perpetual working of her fancy there lurked, perhaps, an unconscious effort to fill the mourning chamber of her heart. Over the luxuriant beauty of her womanhood lay a gentle shadow, which betrayed that the flower had suffered in the blossoming; a little child had lived and died in her tender arms; a little voice had left an echo in her soul, that

was never silent. When Robert was absent, she liked mostly to sit in a room up stairs, from the window of which, over the roofs of the houses, she could see the country fields and hills, and the merry Gled shining amongst them far away. In this room there was an empty cradle standing by the wall, a dusty rocking-chair turned away from the fire-side, a hundred pathetic evidences of the joy that had been and was not. Her memory was stored with songs which she still continued to croon softly and tenderly, even when there was no longer the little one to be lulled to sleep; tears trembled in her voice when she sat thus alone singing to herself, but since the first great anguish was assuaged these tears were of dew rather than of rain. Robert could hear her in the office when he set his door ajar, and sometimes there floated down to him upon the melody of her voice a thought that filled his grave eyes with troubled shadows; after listening a little while, he would mount up stairs to be met with sunny smiles, that more than dispelled them, and sent him back to his desk quite cheerful and complacent, Lilian knew how it hurt Robert to see her suffer, and in his presence she had the elastic habit of always brightening up; in the early maturity of her joy and her sorrow, losing none of her freshness and none of her innocence, her soft, natural gaiety of disposition was only hushed at intervals. She had a marvelous instinct for smoothing the fold out of his brow and unsealing his lips, which Love, no doubt, taught her; indeed, that little master is the one who teaches the very finest of womanly accomplishments; the only one, in fact, who ever brings them to perfection. There was perfect accord and union between Robert and his wife, for if she was warmth and cheer, sunshine and pleasantness to him, he was a careful providence to her, full of tenderness, devotion, and faithfulness, even to a point sometimes to make Lilian laugh merrily, though there were two bright tears brimming her eyes.

## II.

When spring came round with long daylight evenings, and summer with scent of new hay in the meadows, the books were laid aside, and Robert took Lilian out for saunters in the fields or by the waterside, like other citizens with their wives. Peter Carlton would occasionally join them,

and more often Dorothea Sancton; but always, either coming or going, they would look in at the little tea-shop in the Market-place where Dorothea was now sole mistress (old-maid Kibblewhite having finished her course a few months after Robert Hawthorne's marriage), and if she could not go they would take charge of Prim, to give her the benefit of air and exercise instead.

Going there as usual one lovely June evening, they found Dorothea, for an habitually cheerful person, looking truly disconsolate, and on Lilian's inquiring the reason, she said, "It is market-day, and yet there has not been half a dozen customers in the shop since it was opened at eight o'clock. Everybody runs after a novelty, and the new place there," (nodding her head toward a very showy grocer's shop on the other side of the way with mock china jars in the window) "professes to undersell us all; but it is very poor stuff the people get for their money, I do believe."

"They will soon find that out and return to the old place, Dorothea," Robert said, cheerfully. "The best keep to you still, don't they?"

"Lady Nugent and Lady Leigh do, and a few like them; but Dean Mauleverer's housekeeper goes *there*" (again by a contemptuous gesture indicating the rival shop). "I have seen her myself twice enter it—once last week and once this. Well, I'm thankful poor Aunt Kibblewhite did not live to see it, for I think losing old customers like the Dean would have broken her heart. There's his name on the books as long as seven-and-twenty years ago! As for the farmer's wives they always go where they can deal a penny cheaper if what they buy is twopence worse!" It was so unusual to hear Dorothea Sancton say anything harsh or unjust that it was easy to see that the inconstancy of old customers cut her to the quick.

"Come out and have a walk with us," suggested Lilian; "it will cheer you, and make things look brighter. We are going over the fields toward Hadley Royal: here is Mistress Prim already wagging her apology for a tail, in anticipation of a scamper through the deep meadow grass."

Dorothea craned her neck across the counter to get a look at her canine favorite on the other side of it, and Prim looked up at her, in return, with a pathetic whine.

"Nay, she thinks you are going to take her to her two puppy sons, who were launched on the world to-day, one as

parish clerk's dog, and the other as companion to old Miss Burr," said she, shaking her head at the beast in a way she seemed perfectly to understand, for she sat down on the floor and vented a mournful howl. Dorothea then went to put on her bonnet, and rejoined her friends soon; the three crossed the Market-place out of the town, poor Prim following with her maternal woes lying heavily on her heart. In her mind's ear she heard piteous yelps for succor issuing from chilly outhouses where her bereft offspring were tied up for terms of solitary confinement; and, as she walked, her ears and tail became limp and drooping with ineffectual sympathy.

It was a delicious evening, and the freshly cut grass was all tossed over the meadows to dry, perfuming the air with its warm scent. They did not walk far, for the heat of the day was scarcely evaporated, and the breeze in the thick green trees was almost imperceptible. Nevertheless, the scenery was lovely, and the ripple on the water by which they were strolling, communicated an idea of coolness and freshness which was very pleasant to people who spent the day enclosed in the dusty and sultry town. Coming to a convenient stile near the river, with a broad elm spreading its branches above it, Lilian proposed that they should sit and rest. It was on an elevation from which, in one direction, extended Gleddale, with the Hadley woods and Eure-vaulx in the distance; and in the other, the town canopied by smoke and with the low Minster towers shining through, in color only a denser vapor than the rest. The fine trees in the churchyard, and the gardens on the Minster hill, gave it the appearance of standing in a beautiful grove; and the little Gled, after its last flash in the sunshine, disappeared under the one-arched bridge, to wind a devious way through the nests of houses and issue forth at the other side of the town, and become the tributary of a larger river a few miles away, amongst the hills. This stile was a very favorite testing point in Lilian's walks with Robert.

The grass was greener on the waterside, the overgrown hedgerows were more luxuriantly tangled, full of dog-roses and honeysuckle; and in their season there was wealth of lip and finger staining blackberries, which she and Lola had gathered and eaten many a time with poor long-nosed, sad-eyed Madame Lefevre waiting at the stile.

It was while sitting there that Dorothea Sancton, forget-



ting her own immediate grievances, said, "Well, Robert Hawthorne, I suppose you have heard the news?"

"No; what news?" was the simultaneous question of both her companions.

"Young Lady Nugent has a little son. Dr. Sandford dropped in and told me about half an hour before tea."

"How proud and delighted Lady Leigh will be!" exclaimed Lilian: while Robert said nothing; he was looking on the ground, and thinking of how Cyrus would feel when he heard of this new heir.

"Yes," said Dorothea; "it was a grand disappointment the first child's being a girl, but this will make up for it. There will be fine rejoicings over him as the son of Sir Philip Nugent's old age. I fancied a minute since that I heard the Hadley church bells, but what little wind there is sets the other way and carries the sound up the valley."

They all listened, however, and, softened by distance, they could indeed hear the silvery peals making merry over the event. These bells, which were celebrated for their melody throughout the country, had been brought originally from the Abbey, and must since then have rung many such epochs in and out—birth, marriage, or death of every Nugent since Hadley came into possession of that race. Robert Hawthorne would have been something more than mortal if he could have heard these tidings unmoved. Hot, resentful memories such as used to torment his brother surged up turbulently in his mind and kept him silent. Lilian was silent too, thinking of the delicious happiness of the mother of a living child, and wondering, as she listened to the pealing of the bells, whether God would ever again give her that unutterable joy.

As they were returning home, Dorothea began to ask Robert if he had yet had any intelligence of his brother.

"Not a word," replied Robert; "not a word since I saw him in London a year ago last October."

"His behavior is very mysterious, and unbrotherly to my thinking, but I will tell you why I asked. Miss Burr always lends me her newspaper, and in to-day's there was an account of one of those great meetings of the factory folks at Derby, and of John Dawson's address to them—I suppose it would be the same John Dawson as you heard in London?"

"Most likely; it is not probable that there are two men of the same name engaged in the same mission."

"And the newspaper went on to say that after John Dawson, a young man, a stranger, got up to speak, but the people were so excited that he could not be heard—I thought, Robert, was that young man your brother?"

"Oh, no; Cyrus has better principle and better wit," exclaimed Robert; "I could imagine him going to any length of extravagant or speculative folly, but I do not believe he would ever join himself to a cause like Dawson's, because all his prejudices of nature and education are against it."

Notwithstanding this disclaimer, the suggestion had evidently disturbed Robert, however.

"But sometimes disappointments change all that," replied Dorothea: "though no one could, one would think, dream of following in Dawson's steps who was not identified heart and soul with the poor people. You must know I rather admire Dawson."

"I am not surprised—half you women are Radicals at heart, though strict Tories in practice," said Robert.

Lilian begged to know if he meant to include her, as she objected to being called names, only she liked poor people to be well off.

"Whatever we are, the responsibility of the mischief that is going on does not lie with us," added Dorothea; "and that's a comfort! John Dawson finds evils, and aggravates while trying to heal them. He will not always be able to hold these people, more's the pity; he does not understand them; and when they do break out, it will be of no use to say he meant well. I have heard Aunt Kibblewhite tell of the dreadful work there was amongst the North folk in the war time when wages were low and food dear, and I'm sure we may pray not to have such doings repeated in our day."

"You are turning into a student of politics, Dorothea," remarked Lilian, with a rallying smile.

"Politics! my dear, don't say *politics*, say contemporary history," laughed Dorothea; "one must interest oneself in something; and now that I have to sit in the shop so many hours without any body coming to buy my tea, I have plenty of time to read the papers and settle the affairs of the nation."

At this period of her life Dorothea began to grow almost as anecdotic in her conversation as ever old-maid Kibblewhite had been, and all the rest of the way back to the town she recalled histories of food-riots, mill-burnings, and ma-

chinery-breakings by angry mobs, which histories formed a considerable part of her inheritance from her deceased relative. The recital of these great disasters seemed to raise her spirits and dwarf her personal grievances, for when Robert and Lilian left her and Prim at their own door, she said, hopefully,

“Don’t either of you be anxious about what I told you of customers leaving me; perhaps I have made too much of it, and it is only a temporary fluctuation of trade, which will improve when times are better. Meanwhile I must practice the science of household economy;” and she went indoors, nodding and laughing in her own hearty, cheerful, natural way.

### III.

Lilian Hawthorne was not strong now, she never had been strong since her baby died; and occasionally sitting in her place at Minster, Lady Leigh had observed the look of delicate languor that would come over her sweet face, and had experienced a twinge of remorse for the implacable resentment she still cherished against her for the act of disobedience committed in her marriage. When her child was born, Lilian had hoped forgiveness might be extended to her in her happiness; and when the child died she had hoped again, that it might be sent as a comfort in her sorrow; but the hope failed her both times, for Lady Leigh’s heart continued as hard against her as the nether millstone.

In a moment of delighted expansion over the fulfilment of her highest desires, however, the old dame determined that she would be magnanimous, and signalize the great event at Hadley Royal by pardoning the lesser folks in Maiden Lane. The gracious act was precipitated by a visit she paid to Dr. Sandford, in the course of which she astonished that elderly gentleman by a peremptory demand to know what he thought of young Mrs. Robert Hawthorne. Whatever he told her, her black eyes were obscured, and her step more uncertain than usual as she tottered back to her carriage, and commanded herself to be driven to the entrance of Maiden Lane. Descending again there, she walked down the shady side of the street to Robert Hawthorne’s door, with Sempronius following closely. Betsy, all trimmed up for the afternoon, answered the resounding

knock in haste and wonderment, and was still more surprised when she saw who wanted admission. She explained that her mistress was not well, and that she had gone to lie down and rest a little after dinner.

"Let me come in and wait until she wakes," said Lady Leigh; and the servant, having shown her into the parlor, went down to the office to tell her master who was come.

Left alone for a minute or two, she tried to collect her thoughts for what she ought to say, and asked herself, were Lilian's friends *blind*, that they did nothing? No; they were *not* blind. Already they had seen that strange expression in her beautiful eyes, as if unconsciously she were beginning to look out beyond the things of this present time to what should be hereafter. The fear and dread of it was in the heart of every one who loved her, but it had as yet found no voice to utter it.

It was a sultry day, and the Venetian blinds in the parlor were down over the open windows, through which were wafted rare breaths of air. Lady Leigh could not help looking round, after awhile, with some curiosity at the home Lilian had chosen at the penalty of her displeasure, and was surprised to see how little it differed in all essentials from her own house upon the Minster Hill. Robert had had the old-fashioned wainscoting painted and varnished beautifully like satin-wood, the furniture to correspond, and hangings, covers, and carpets of a deep rich crimson, softened now by white-muslin curtains and cushion-covers. A handsome, antique, circular mirror, with very ornate gilded frame, was over the chimney-piece, and several fine oval portraits hung upon the panels. To give more light and reflection, a large plate of looking-glass had been let into the long space between the windows, and others into the panels of a folding-door, which now standing open showed a second and smaller room beyond, fitted up in a precisely similar manner. There were plenty of old-fashioned china jars, bowls and plates; and there was, beside, the sweet scent of pot-pourri, such as Lilian's fingers had yearly been employed to mix while she lived with Lady Leigh. There was a piano, there were books new and old, there was a basket with a half-finished piece of fancy work lying unfolded beside it; there was a writing-table, with all the pretty trifles for a lady's use: and, gravely considering these details of comfort or taste, Lady Leigh said, half aloud—

"The child cannot be pining from any lack of luxuries she was used to. Robert Hawthorne must really have a great deal more indulgence for his wife than is common in his class, and it is precisely in these little things, which are the signs of a thoughtful love, that the subtlest happiness of a woman often consists."

The door opened, and Robert Hawthorne himself came in, very grave, respectful, and surprised.

"Robert Hawthorne, I have come to see your wife," said Lady Leigh, abruptly.

"Lilian will be very glad; she has long desired it," replied Robert, with frank dignity.

"Has she? I am sure she has had little need. But first I am glad of the opportunity of speaking to you."

Having made this beginning, Lady Leigh paused, struck with the painfulness of what she had undertaken, and scarcely knowing how to broach it with sufficient caution if, perchance, as yet, no alarm had suggested itself to Robert. He waited for her to proceed, having a presentiment of her mission; but, finding that she still hesitated, he himself said, though not without an effort—

"You have been struck by the change in Lilian's looks: she is not strong, but she has no real illness, nothing seriously to fear." He looked as if he longed to be reassured on the matter, however.

Lady Leigh understood him, and, full of pity, spoke cheerfully.

"I am quite relieved to hear you say so, for last Sunday at Minster prayers, I thought her looking very white and fragile, and I determined to come and beg a favor of you. I know you tradesmen cannot leave your shops like those who have no occupation, but if you will confide her to me I will take her to the sea-side and nurse her myself. I believe she wants change of air more than anything else; when she was younger, she had frequent change, as you may know."

"Whatever my dear wife wants, I am both able and willing to give her. Why did not Dr. Sandford suggest change of air before?" exclaimed Robert, anxiously.

"Do not consult Dr. Sandford on the matter; he is nothing but an old croaker," replied Lady Leigh, with vexed impatience. "Besides, he says that Lilian, unlike many women who have suffered loss in their household, has a positive reluctance to leave home."

Robert Hawthorne tacitly understood from this that Lady Leigh had herself been consulting the physician, and that what he had admitted, had been of a nature to increase her fears; he could not, however, bring himself to ask explanation, and the opportunity passed away.

Unheard, she was so light of foot, Lilian had come downstairs, and now appeared in the opening of the folding-doors, with a sudden flush of surprise on her delicate face. The instant she saw Lady Leigh she uttered a cry of joy, and ran to her, while the stately old dame rose up all trembling and received her with as much affection as if her heart had yearned to her every day during the two long years of their separation. The tears were in Lilian's eyes, of course, but she found voice enough to falter out how glad she was.

"You are astonished to see me, and well you may be," replied Lady Leigh, with a grave shake of her head; "however, I thought it was time we forgave each other. Kiss me and sit down, for you are shaking like an aspen-leaf."

The ancient lady evidently believed that all the grace of pardon was her own, but Lilian did not care for that, so long as they were reconciled. Robert drew his young wife's favorite chair near to that of their visitor, shook up the cushions, and put her gently into it, for she had betrayed signs of sinking on her knees, and of otherwise resuming the loving humilities of her girlhood; so she contented herself with holding her benefactress's two withered hands and reiterating her expressions of joy.

"And what do you think is the special part of my mission?" Lady Leigh asked, looking at her attentively. "It is to beg Robert to make you over to me for a few weeks, to be nursed and taken better care of than you take of yourself."

"Oh! but I could never be spared from home; could I, Robert?" said Lilian, determinedly.

"The little thing has a great idea of her own value! But my proposal was to carry you off to the sea and strengthen you up, and perhaps Robert cannot conveniently give the time to go with you."

Lilian's eyes turned with a wistful, coaxing expression to Robert, as she answered—

"I know what I should like if I might do it."

"What, Lily?" said Robert, eagerly.

"To make your summer journey with you. I am sure

that would do me good. You are going where we went when we were married."

"And where is that?" Lady Leigh inquired.

"Into Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland, and home again through the most beautiful parts of Yorkshire."

"If it were not too fatiguing I see no objection; but how do you travel? that is the main consideration."

"Oh, we have a phaeton now; have you never seen Robert driving me out in it?" said Lilian, laughing.

"Yes, Mistress Pride, I have."

"The old gig was so high that I was afraid of climbing into it, and besides, it threatened to fall to pieces at every jolt; so, though Mr. Otley insisted that a gig was more appropriate and respectable for a tradesman, Robert bought a phaeton to please me. The journey would only be like taking new and pleasant drives every day. There is nothing I should enjoy more."

"Then you shall certainly try it, Lily; in the best season of the year—long days, and sunny days; I don't doubt that it will do you good."

"It is not the variety only," said Lady Leigh; "she wants to identify herself with the business transactions, and to become a little tradeswoman; she will elect herself to the office of chief clerk by and bye."

Lilian laughed, but made no confession; perhaps her white little fingers *had* put themselves once and again to commonplace uses—when Mr. Constant fell suddenly ill, for instance, and was six weeks away from the office, and George Sancton chose to arrange his wedding for the beginning of the New Year, when there were sheafs of bills to make out; she had not practised secretaryship for nothing to an old lady with a large correspondence; and it is certain she could ply an active little pen upon occasion. It was a curious change, however, to hear Lady Leigh jest on so low a theme; but, in fact, the sight of Robert's house had mollified her into the idea that buyers and sellers were not necessarily vulgar. If it had been a shining, new place out of the town, she would have been less gratified; but that he should have contented himself by staying in his uncle's old house, and changing its dismal appearance into one really tasteful and refined, showed a modest sense of his position and its natural embellishments, which was highly satisfactory to a mind ever antagonistic to progress and the arrogance of one class galling the heels of

another. It *might* have occurred to her that it was the *business* of the head of the firm of Hawthorne and Co. to have skill and good taste in house decoration and every thing thereto appertaining, but it did not.

Robert presently returned to the office, leaving his wife and her old friend to complete their reconciliation alone, which they did, with many kisses and many tears, as the custom of women is. Lilian had to speak of her little one in heaven; and Lady Leigh to express her proud satisfaction in the birth of an heir to Hadley Royal; she was rather curious to learn how Robert Hawthorne had taken the news of the event, but Lilian discreetly evaded the subject, and the old lady was too well-feeling to press it; she could conjecture pretty accurately the state of the case. Before taking her leave, she engaged Lilian to pay an early visit to the Minster hill; and, in reply to the pæan of praise, which the happy little wife could not resist the triumph of singing in her husband's honor, she good-humoredly replied—

“You were wiser in your generation, Lilian, than I was myself; your choice has turned out well; but with Nugent blood in his veins Robert Hawthorne could not fail to have some of the sentiments and feelings of a gentleman.”

#### IV.

It was a genuine pleasure to Lilian to find herself, after nearly three years' exile, once more admitted to the sacred shade of Lady Leigh's pot-pourri-scented drawing-room on the Minster hill. She went to spend a long day there on an occasion when Robert was called into the country on business, and Lady Nugent and Mistress Alice Johnes came also to luncheon.

Since Lola was left in Paris for her artistic training under her own kin, Lady Leigh had not adopted any child exclusively, but had given her time and her money to the bringing forward of pretty, portionless, marriageable girls, and acting by them the part of a good providence. Lilian had to listen to the story of all her charitable works in this department, and heard with pleasure that those two proper and discreet young women, Sophia and Caroline Lowther, had been provided with sufficient portions to secure them very good establishments in life.



"But what you would not have expected from me, my dear, is the procuring of a silly love-match; and yet that is what I have lately been about," said Lady Leigh, with a glow of inward satisfaction illuminating her dark visage; "my sister, Lady Nugent, could not have been more foolish or enthusiastic about it than I was myself."

"I am sure it was a good work," said Lilian, mischievously.

"That is yet to be proved. They are as poor as church mice and mere children, but I was touched—really, my dear, touched—more than I had ever been since I was young myself and a slim ensign courted me, but I had wise parents."

"I don't know, Lady Leigh, whether they *were* wise if you loved each other, for a marriage of love is the happiest lot God can give us."

"My dear, I will admit you as an authority on the subject; 'tis easy to see that Robert does not believe there exists any where an equal to his dear wife. I thought you would give him some trouble; you had your willful little tempers."

"And have still—but they save us from monotony; don't say they are wilful, though, for they come and go in my own despite."

"And I dare say Robert finds them easy to forgive; indeed, men ought to have a great deal of indulgence for their wives when they consider what they must suffer for them—only they don't consider it. And of all the miserable things on the face of the earth, the marriage of a woman to a stupid, selfish, heartless man is the most miserable. I have seen it, my dear; I have seen it."

"And your slim ensign, Lady Leigh, what became of him?"

"What became of him, my dear? Why he married a pretty child without a sixpence, and they had a great family of children; Waterloo made her a widow, and it is precisely with his eldest boy that I have just been making myself busy, with Arthur Davenport and Cecy Lisle—you know Cecy? she is niece to Sir Philip Nugent's wife. Her mother made a runaway love-match in her time, and has never been quite forgiven for it yet."

"It is as pretty a little story as I ever read in a book!" said Lilian, pleased and laughing.

"Yes, my dear, there is the germ of a romance in it. My

young pair—I always call them mine—are so full of themselves and their happiness and innocence, and the beauty, goodness, and delight of every thing they see, that to me they appear respectively five and six years old—not a grain of experience between them. If you meet on your travels with two young fools making the best of an ensign's pay and a hundred a year additional, with pretty laughing faces and a general faith in the truth and purity of the world, you may be quite sure they are my pair. My nephew, Sir Philip, bought Arthur his commission, and Cecy's grandmother, Lady Lowther, gave an old lace wedding-gown; as for poor Julia, her mother, she sewed like a seamstress for them both, and sent them out really well supplied. I have promised them a hundred a year for as long as they live together without a quarrel; and really, my dear, though as a rule I have a very poor opinion of love-matches, I do believe that in this instance I shall have to settle my gift in perpetuity."

"I hope you will; and whether or no, they will have had their happy season."

"Mistress Alice Johnes ought to be here now to lecture you on such irregular views of life."

"She would not change my mind; I think it good and right to take whatever of happiness the present offers us, and to leave the future evil to take care of itself. We must all drink our portion of sorrow, but we need not mix additional draughts of bitterness which no duty prescribes; that is my philosophy."

"And I suppose it was in the spirit of that philosophy that you ventured to defy me and marry Robert Hawthorne," said Lady Leigh, to which Lilian replied with a blushing smile and a pretty little audacious gesture of the head, which made her old patroness first call her a naughty thing and then kiss her forgivingly. There was not much change perceptible in the ancient benefactress of orphans so far as looks or bodily vigor went, but Lilian noticed that she expressed gentler, more charitable, and more sympathetic feelings than were formerly common on her lips. The active practical goodness of her life had returned upon herself with softening power, and had made her in reality what once she had only seemed; and at this moment, sitting in the sunshine of a kind deed, a genial warmth infused itself into her words and ways such as was perhaps originally more her nature than the austere deportment we have known as hers hitherto.

When, at midday, Lady Nugent and Mrs Alice Johnes arrived, Lilian was sorry to have their two-handed chat interrupted; but perceiving that Lady Nugent had some communication of importance to make to her sister, she permitted the little Welshwoman to draw her away to the window for a brief gossip apart. While listening to her inflated trifles, however, she could not but be aware of something painful going on so near her; Lady Nugent seemed inexpressibly saddened, but Lady Leigh, whose ire was never difficult to rouse, showed herself violently indignant.

"But Dr. Sandford says he has no longer a doubt of it," were the first words Lilian distinctly heard in Lady Nugent's grieved voice.

"Dr. Sanford is a simpleton!" was Lady Leigh's sharp rejoinder. "There was never a Nugent born into the world yet who was not perfectly sound in body and sane in mind. I will never believe that such an intolerable disgrace is to fall upon the family now. The boy's eyes are brighter a great deal than Dr. Sandford's own."

Lilian, at hearing these expressions, glanced inquiringly at Mistress Alice Johnes, who bent forward and whispered:

"Such a very painful thing, my dear; have you not heard? Dr. Sandford says Lady Nugent's son was born blind; he has not begun to notice any thing, and they think even worse than that:" she touched her forehead significantly with her forefinger.

Lady Leigh began to pace the room angrily, protesting and reasoning against Dr. Sandford's report, and emphasizing her words every now and then by a thud of the gold-headed cane which supported her steps. The mortification of the truth was too keen to be believed. Lady Nugent said she was going to drive over to Hadley Royal to visit Phyllis and comfort her that afternoon—would her sister go? No; Lady Leigh would not go; she did not believe there was any need for comfort, and she would never give any credit to the idea that that wild goose Dr. Sandford chose to promulgate until it had been certified by the first medical men in the kingdom. The intelligence, whether true or false, had, however, quite spoilt her for enjoying Lilian's company, and when Lady Nugent drove away after luncheon to Hadley, she almost repented that she had not gone too."

"It is scarcely possible that such a humiliation is to befall me in my old age," said she, pettishly. "I was so proud to

think that there was a son at last to carry on the old family, and yet they dare to say he is blind, and that if he lives, he will be of weak intellect. How do they pretend to know? But can any thing more disappointing, more cruel, more mortifying, be imagined! Phyllis had better never have borne a son at all. What a blow it will be to Philip!" And so on for an hour or more, alternately asserting her utter disbelief in the possibility of such a calamity, and commenting on it as an ascertained fact.

When the afternoon was half spent, she grew still more restless and impatient of herself, and began to think it would only be right and kind to go and reassure Phyllis, and ascertain for her own satisfaction how much or how little of Dr. Sandford's opinion was worthy of credit.

"Yes, I ought to go, my dear, but first come upstairs to my room with me, for when I once get to Hadley Royal," said she, querulously, "there most likely I shall remain until you have set off on your journey with Robert. I am very glad to have seen you, and but for this bad news it would have done me a world of good."

Lilian followed her up to the solemn, well-remembered room, from the door of which she had once been repulsed, and on entering saw a vast cloak and hood of dark-blue military cloth hanging over the Chinese screen to air in the hot sun which was pouring in at the window. Lady Leigh pointed to this extensive garment with a smile, and said—

"I am going to give you my cloak as a traveling wrap, and mind you are not too proud to wear it, though it is a little out of date in the fashion of its cut. The air of the Dales is sharp and the showers are sudden, but neither rain nor cold will penetrate this old traveling companion of mine—they do not make such cloaks for women now; and don't forget to pull the hood over your head, if you should happen to be out late when the dew falls; the damp is not good for your chest."

Lilian was very grateful for the care and affection the gift implied, and gave all the required promises, which led Lady Leigh to expatiate somewhat sentimentally on the various adventures she had had in that old cloak.

"When it was new, I was as young a wife as you, and crossed the Alps in it with my Lord Leigh, who was passionately fond of traveling," said she. "Napoleon had not then been there, my dear, and traveling was a very different

thing from what it is now ; we stopped a night at the Hospice of St. Bernard, and a miserable, dreary place I recollect it was. There is scarcely a country in Europe where I and my old cloak have not been together ; so use it respectfully, Lilian, as a vestment that could tell you many strange experiences if it would. And mind, my dear, to take particular care of yourself. Is Robert thoughtful for you ? men are not always thoughtful !”

“ Oh, yes ; he spoils me to my heart’s content.”

“ And according to your philosophy, you would rather have a life short and happy, than long and tedious.”

Lilian cordially answered, “ Yes ;” though she did not see the bearing of the remark on any thing that had gone before.

“ Why should not my life be *long* and happy too ?” said she ; and Lady Leigh only replied, “ Why not ?” and renewed her careful injunctions as to the wearing of the cloak, and especially of the hood.

“ And now, my love, you will not think me unkind if I send you away earlier than I intended,” added she, drawing Lilian’s soft, delicate cheek to her own wrinkled one, with an affection that was rarely visible in her gestures. “ Should that croaking old doctor’s report be true, Phyllis will need all of us to console her ; she is a very good mother, and surely *this* sorrow of hers must be greater than even the loss of children. How say you, Lilian ?—you should know.”

“ I think it is. I grew resigned to Lucy’s loss, in remembering that our Father in Heaven had her safe ; but I believe the anguish of seeing a little innocent always suffering, would have made my heart passionately rebellious.”

“ I could have borne your trial, too, better than this of poor Phyllis’s ; but I never had a choice of either ; and I dare say the sorrow of being childless was as grievous to me in my proud young days, more grievous even, than your loss, or her distress. But I am an old woman now, and have no very distinct recollection of these things, so it is foolish to talk ; a sign that I am nearing the bottom of the hill, that I begin to babble of the past.”

Once started on her road to Hadley, the horses could not go fast enough for Lady Leigh’s impatience ; but, arrived there, all the worst news was soon but too well confirmed. She found Sir Philip in a frame of proud annoyance and Phyllis heavily crying by the child’s cot, while her mother

offered her dry, hard precepts of fortitude and resignation, in which there was neither profit or consolation. There was more comfort in one kiss from her little daughter, one clasp of the gentle arms about her neck, or in one soft word of hope from pale-faced old grand-mamma Nugent, than in all the dignified counsels of Lady Lowther, whose sleep and appetite never once failed her in this crisis of family trouble.

Lady Leigh had not much tenderness, but she had great pride in the Nugent race, and would rather see it extinct than dragged on in an enervated line. Looking at the feeble little baby-face, which had no trace of its great forefathers about it, and only a stamp of weak physical misery, she said softly to herself, that it would be well if it would please God to take it.

And it did please God to take it: there was no welcome and little love for such a poor reckling in that house of luxury and pride. Phyllis suffered and loved, as mothers must suffer and love, but she did not regret it; if it had lived, it would have been a reproach to her more than a treasure. Imbecile and blind, who but her could have borne with it? —and how much was her pleasure-loving nature capable of bearing, even for an afflicted child? Alas! the proof was best spared her.

Within a very few months the little sealed eyes were opened in heaven; and old John, the stonecutter in the Minster Yard, was busy whistling and chipping at a fine white marble monument, "To the memory of Everard, infant son of Sir Philip Nugent, of Hadley Royal, and of Phyllis his wife."

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

## MARTYRS.

"LET our unceasing, earnest prayer  
Be, too, for light—for strength to bear  
Our portion of the weight of care,  
That crushes into dumb despair  
One-half the human race.

"O suffering, sad humanity!  
O ye afflicted ones, who lie  
Steeped to the lips in misery,  
Longing and yet afraid to die,  
Patient, though sorely tried!

"I pledge you in this cup of grief,  
Where floats the fennel's bitter leaf,  
The battle of our life is brief,  
The alarm—the struggle—the relief—  
Then sleep we side by side."

LONGFELLOW.

## I.

WHEN Robert Hawthorne and his wife, in the course of their journey, stopped at Millburn, the factory folk of that great town had been out on strike between two and three months. The canopy of smoke which habitually hung black and dense over its streets and close-packed houses, had made way for sweet summer airs; but it had made way too for the inroads of gaunt famine, pestilence, and death amongst the thousands to whom its presence was the sign of labor, wages, and daily bread.

When we have the courage to affront this simple fact in all its fatal significance, our hearts may well stand still in wonder and admiration of the great patience of the poor. Surely it will be counted to them for righteousness against the weight of their blind sin and ignorant, weariful perversity! Think of it,—not the privation of one meal, not the pinched pains of one day, not the sharp grip of want which father or mother can bear because they bear it alone, but

the emptiness of a household, the emptiness of hundreds of households! the swift perishing of virile strength, the pallid wasting of little children's frames, the blank, silent suffering that lays hold of body and soul, and wears them down to the edge of the grave. And this is borne in *patience*—patience, the special virtue and strength of the poor. "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be," had need to be one of the first of God's truths taught to those whose day is destined to carry from sunrise to sunset a too heavy burden of labor and sorrow.

At the best of times they rarely get more than the rind of the fruit of their toils; their brows sweat for the luxuries that are to lap the softness of their betters; and they go home contented to their hard fare and hard rest with a dim consciousness that the difference is ordained by an everlasting law to which men have only to submit. Not against their work do they rebel; not against the scant pleasures and daily insufficiency of food, which by and bye becomes as habitual and natural to them as over-abundance becomes indispensable to the rich; but only when they are ground down in their wages until barely enough is changed into literal need; then the dumb sentiment of natural justice is roused, wakes up, protests in patient indignation—protests sometimes with violence and force, to be cowed into silence again by a more powerful force, but ultimately to be heard and to have its influence. When? The sufferers may indeed ask "*When?*" with incredulous bitterness.

How long must we labor in the fields in darkness, in cold, in rain, stiffened by pain into premature age, for a pittance on which we and our children starve rather than live? How long shall the ploughers, the sowers, the reapers of earth's rich harvest have but a scant gleanings for their wages? How long shall the thews and sinews of a man be worth to him for his twelve hours under the sky, every day for three hundred days in the year, no more than eight or ten shillings a week, with the workhouse as a harbor of refuge in his old age?

How long shall we others toil in close rooms, with the dust clogging our lungs, and the greedy machinery every now and then, snatching a sacrifice from amongst us, and rending him limb from limb? How long shall we and our children pine in miserable lanes where the air and sunshine of heaven cannot come—where death and disease abide



continually, and their ghastly brother, *Famine*, comes at our master's will and beats us into submission.

How long shall we women be starved into sin? How long shall we children be crippled with ignorance in soul, and stunted in body by lack of bread? How long will covetous men muzzle the patient ox that treads out the corn, and insolently uphold that the laborer is *not* worthy of his hire.

Such cries as these have gone up to heaven from amongst us too often; the answer that a better time will come is too indefinite.

What will it be to me, whose little ones asked bread when I had none to give them, and whose wails are in my ears night and day though the sods of the churchyard cover them, that the better time comes to me alone, the mother of none but dead children?

What will it be to me that the better time should give me enough and to spare, the day after the love of my youth has fallen asleep in my arms in exhaustion and hunger, never, never more, to wake up again to the pain of our hard life?

What will the better time be to me, polluted temple of affection, or to me fettered in the bands of young crime, or to me bruised and broken and wrung with misery?

The past cannot be undone; our wrongs can never be righted; our times of anguish cannot be un-lived; our withered hearts can put forth no new blooms; the shadow of our suffering can never take its cold chill out of our souls. Human like you, capable of all love and all virtue, starved by the same frosts, warmed by the same suns, equal in kind but inferior in degree, no future can help us to forget our past. The things done bear their eternal consequences; nothing can ever set us right, except the glorious renewal of life in the flood that you and we must cross over with the pale steersman *Death*?

And beyond that flood, amongst the ranks of that noble army of martyrs, is a great company of the faithful and patient poor who, not in this world able to see the why of their cruel sacrifice, yet carried their cross humbly until *Death* took it and gave them their crown instead. In the great plains of heaven how shall some of us meet these despoised and oppressed and down-trodden ones? Even there will the pale trace of their wounds haunt us, reproach us, if

ever we have closed our ears to their cry or hardened our hearts against their distress.

The same God who said that we should have the poor always with us, said that charity to them was something lent to him which should be repaid, and that, besides, it should cover a multitude of sins. Men have taken that promise to heart, and have thus found it often easier to be *charitable* than to be *just*—to give an alms easier than to pay a wage.

Our age has somewhat of its duty to do which has been too long forgotten in this same article of wage for labor. What has the laboring man now that he had not one, two, three, four, five, six, a dozen centuries ago? Is he better lodged? Look at his miserable cabin amongst the fields, his loathsome room in the great cities, where his children fester in sickness and sin. Is he better clad? See him shivering his way to his winter labors; see the blue thin limbs of his little ones; no great advance here on the primitive woad and the sheep-skins. Is he better fed? He has what keeps body and soul together, and no more; less he could not have, even when his feudal masters sat in damp stone rooms luxuriously carpeted with rushes.

And what have the rich, the master classes, gained in the progress of civilization? Luxuries so enervating, that their very over-multiplicity becomes the theme of feeble, dolorous, ludicrous complaint in newspapers; our rose-leaf is crumpled, our stimulated palates loathe rich food and crave ever-fresh delights! We have cried, "God help the poor!" long enough; it is high time that we should call Him to the rescue of the rich—save them from the bathos of repletion, from the stagnant bogs of selfish indulgence!

It has seemed to me, sometimes, in considering this vexed question of labor and wages, that there is a long outstanding debt due to the working people of this country which will have to be paid.

What has been withheld by the strong hand is no other than robber's spoil in fact, and will have to be disgorged sooner or later. But these are dangerous subjects, not to be handled with impunity—lest the consequences prove disastrous as the child's flinging fire about.

But let us imagine a Utopia where the greed of gain and luxury is not the predominant, all-absorbing passion; where one class is contented with rather less, that another may have a little more; where the rule of right reigns in lieu of the

rule of might, and men yield to others their due, not because they *must*, but because they *ought*. There is a clutching rapacity outside this Utopia which grinds, and grinds, and grinds, without remorse, until it has discovered the minimum of what a poor soul will take for the use of the physical machine in which it vegetates; and, this stupendous problem worked out to a man's own entire satisfaction, he begins to preach solemnly on the laws of supply and demand, and to profess himself an apostle of social science and political economy: hear him, the wise and able person, and then reduce his frothy doctrines to their first principles. He has actually found out that his working brothers agree with the old adage, in thinking "half a loaf better than no bread!"—and if half a loaf can be made to represent a whole one shall he be so lavish as to double this dole? He has made the standard, and there are selfish fools by thousands ready to range themselves under it, and stint the worker of his hire to the finest limits of human endurance. But in Utopia it is another thing. The masters there content themselves with smaller profits, and let some little more of the gain fall to the hard hands that earn it all; there is not so much show and waste in one home or such grievous pinching need in another: and yet this Utopia seems not unreal; it seems as if it might be reduced to actual practice, if men would cease to regard their fellow-men as chattels to be bought cheap, instead of their equals in all but the accident of position.

If we could change places for a single year! If the ro-tund comely master, with his kind wife and little, laughing, healthy children, could be unconsciously transported from their warm pleasant cheerful rooms, their abundant table, their soft beds, their easy pleasures, to the one attic in the close alley where lives the poor factory hand with his ailing wife and brood of neglected little ones, where, in a few months, would be the sleek and rosy outlines of their faces, the pompous self-content of their daily life and conversation? The winter winds blow, there is ice on the pane, there is robin pecking at the window-sill; close round the handful of fire in the starved grate, closer and closer still, but the very flame is poverty-bitten and will not warm them; there is the meal on the table—*so very little for so many, but it must do*; then half hungry to bed, and up again in the dark morning, and forth to the mill while the rich world has two

hours on its pillow still. This is the discipline of life of thousands—thousands. Hard to realize, almost impossible to realize without the experience. And how little more, spared in the shape of wages for honest work from the master's superfluity, would change all this, give the laborer and his children *enough*; a very common-place word that *enough*, but between it and *too little* lies the deep but narrow gulf which swallows up young lives as if they were nought, and weakens by its faint miasma the vital strength and courage of the sinews of labor by which the world exists.

I shall never forget the odd look of a tall, lank farm-laborer, who had a wife and but one child, of whom I asked the simple question—

“Why do you always chew that bit of tobacco?”

“Because it keeps me from feeling hungry.”

“But what business have *you* ever to be hungry when you are working all the year round on the Squire's farm, and have only two to keep beside yourself?”

“I have worked here from a lad, I worked for the Squire's father before him, and my lad will work for the Squire's son after him.”

“Yes, but about being hungry and the tobacco?”

“I get eighteen pence a day, that's nine shillings a week, —and when you have taken off the rent, and the bit of coals, and the shoes and clothes, there's none so much left to eat, is there?”

I thought there was not much—and the man's patient, uncomplaining resignation of tone and expression while he said so seemed to me pathetic exceedingly. Think of the deep fortitude it needs to bring a man to acquiesce silently in such a lot—wearing out life, hope, energy in an incessant toil which does not even earn enough to stay the cravings of hunger!—the Squire, doing only what others did and do, seeing good days, and as ignorant of any want or lack for himself or his, as if he were a lily of the field! Poor old Squire! sixpence a day more out of thy plump purse would have put a few ounces of flesh on thy laborer's bones, and through all the fifty years of his faithful service, would not have cost thee more than one caprice of thy wealth, of which thou art weary as soon as possessed. And by so much of his deservings as thou didst living withhold from him, wilt thou die in his debt; a curious balancing of accounts should we come to, if we could follow this idea out, and bring up

debtors and creditors to the bar of some Utopian County Court where Public Good Opinion is sitting Judge.

Already this digression is unconscionably long, but it touches on the one social question, which was the root of the distresses in Millburn thirty years ago, when Robert Hawthorne and his wife were there, and which seems to me the root of the periodical crises that occur in mining and manufacturing districts still; the field-laborer is too dependent and too isolated to rebel successfully, and his condition, in some respects, remains the worst of all. Not charity, if she had a hundred hands, could ever feed this want—not public government, for the question is at once individual and universal—not any temporary spasmodic effort—but a higher sentiment of human justice and trading morality: an acknowledgment that a man's labor must be paid for according to its inherent value, and not according to his physical necessities, which reduce him to accept less than its value—as much—or as little, rather—as he can get.

Will this Utopian state of feeling ever reign amongst us? I think it will, when the rich man ceases to mock his Maker, by oppressing the poor; and the diligent shall eat of the labor of his hands and be *satisfied*. No very great thing to ask, and in the long run cheaper than workhouses, reformatories, prisons, hospitals, ragged-schools, and grudging charity doles, and a solvent of some of the hardest difficulties that beset our social condition as a nation.

One cannot live in the quietest way, with one's eyes open, without seeing how the working poor pinch, and spare, and toil, to exist; a bit of help in sickness, a present at Christmas time, are so gratefully welcome: ought it to be so? ought those who can *work* to need *charity*? Plenty of the homeless to shelter, plenty of the naked to clothe, the incapable destitute to feed, plenty of the poor *always* with us to keep that Christian virtue in exercise, without its being diverted into a voluntary payment of other men's debts; for I maintain and repeat that by so much as the master withholds of fair wage from his worker, by just so much, with ever-accumulating interest, does he remain indebted to him.

## II.

Lilian sat by herself half the warm July afternoon, in the great cushioned bow-window of the principal room at the quiet, old-fashioned inn where Robert Hawthorne or his traveling clerk were accustomed to stop on their periodical journeys. It was in a wide suburb leading, in a direct line out of Millburn, to the river and the unenclosed meadows on either side of it, called by the townsfolk the Marsh. The sunshine was on the other side of the way, full against a row of hard-looking red-brick houses, with flights of steps up to the doors, and Milan blinds projecting above every window. The street was as silent at that hour as a street in a city of the dead, and Lilian, who had had a delightful drive in the cool of the morning, followed by dinner, was now enjoying a quiet rest, cosily packed up with all the cushions in the room upon the low window-seat, while Robert went to call on his business friends in the town. He was to come back to tea, and had promised afterward to take her out for a walk, either upon the Marsh, or, if she preferred it, into the town itself; she was, therefore, rather disappointed, when, an hour earlier than she expected him, he returned, saying that it would scarcely be fit for her to leave the inn that evening, because there was going to be a meeting of the hands out of work upon the Marsh, and the street would be an incessant turmoil. While they were sitting at tea, already they heard the first murmurs of a popular gathering, and saw clusters of men and women wending their way to the place of rendezvous. Soon these clusters grew to a continuous stream, until Lilian thought that every great artery of the town must be pouring its current of life-blood toward the Marsh. It was easy enough to distinguish the general characteristics of these people, all the more marked and striking that the struggle in which they had now been engaged between two and three months, was becoming visibly a struggle for life or death: once let the steaming autumnal miasmas around their dwellings begin to act, and these human beings, already debilitated by privations would drop before the sickle of death as drops the ripe corn beneath the sickle of the reaper.

"Robert, isn't it very cruel? I never saw such dreadful faces in my life; look at that poor man there with the child

asleep on his shoulder," said Lilian, in an awed whisper, while her eyes burnt with a pain too strong for tears.

The man she indicated was a specimen as good as any; tall, bony, with great pallid hands clasping the child against his breast; a gaunt, hollow face, grey as a corpse, and eyes sunken, dreary, and spiritless. He trailed his limbs feebly, and looked like a man who had risen from a fever-stricken bed to attend this demonstration—probably he had.

"Oh! Robert, I wish you would run out and give him something!" cried Lilian, clasping her hands passionately. "I can never bear to remember him if you don't."

"Darling, he is not a beggar; we cannot use these men like beggars, but I will try to find him at home;" and while he was speaking, the poor waif passed out of view with the stream, to be succeeded by others and others again with every seal of necessity impressed upon their pallid, worn faces; if Robert had gone to relieve all for whom Lilian's heart bled, he would have needed the purse of Fortunatus.

For an hour and a half the tide of human life poured by, without let or pause. What was, perhaps, most of all remarkable, was the exceeding patience and quietness of the multitude; beyond the sordid tramp of so many feet, there was scarcely a sound at all. It was like the heavy silence that portends a fearful storm. Hitherto there had been no outrage committed, and the people seemed intent on winning for their cause the reputation of a great, passive fortitude and strength; this had been urged upon them by John Dawson and others, who had come to Millburn on the same mission as himself during the strike, and thus far with success. But their silence had done nothing for them, less than nothing; during the week that was just passed, several masters had brought hands from a distance and reopened their mills. John Dawson was coming to-night to speak on this very subject.

About seven o'clock the street was restored to its previous quietness, and only now and then a solitary individual strolled idly in the direction of the Marsh, not so interested as curious to know what might be going on. Robert was unwilling to leave Lilian, but she knew he would like to judge for himself of the effect on the multitude of what might be said, and she urged him to go, not being in the least afraid of any thing happening in his absence; in the end he went.

The people were collected in a dense mass in front of an elevated bank, to the number of many thousands, and John Dawson was standing upon one of the rude seats formed by the bole of a cut-down tree, to address them. So hushed was the throng, and so calm the evening, that every word of his thrilling, distinct voice was audible even to Robert Hawthorne, who stood out amongst the rear ranks, close by where the broad river rippled its way to the sea. He was listened to for some time in patient silence, but at length it began to appear that there was an opposition spirit rising in the crowd, for here and there broke out a dissentient cry, a derisive shout, or a telling question.

Robert's attention was for a minute distracted by a groan beside him, and then a dispirited voice saying, "We'se get nothing by it;" and, looking round, he found that he had for his neighbor the poor fellow who had attracted so much of Lilian's sympathy. Robert stealthily put his hand into his pocket, and, taking out some money, offered it to the man, who, while eyeing it hungrily, still paused to ask—

"Are you one o' they masters? The union says we'se to take nought fro' they masters."

"I am not a mill-master," replied Robert; "and, besides, this is from a woman."

"Thank you, sir, for the little 'uns at home; there's three besides this 'un, an' th' wife's dead."

Robert could have guessed it.

A sudden movement in the crowd thrust them apart, and then Robert saw Dawson stand down from the rude estrade he had occupied, while another man, younger and taller, rose suddenly in his place. Robert looked again with a thick throbbing at his heart, and a sudden flush over his face. The new apostle of the people was his brother Cyrus.

Cyrus! The same careless grace in his figure, attitudes, gestures; the same eager, beautiful visage, the same pleasant, light, clear voice; bare-headed, the dark rings of his hair stirred by the wind, and his bright eyes wandering over the sea of faces turned toward his, with a curious unconsciousness of what they expressed. He began to speak, and was listened to for some time with greater patience than Dawson had been. His utterance was very distinct, fluent, and even—but what was it that it lacked, and made his weightiest periods of no significance whatever? In ten minutes and less, the heart of the suffering multitude felt that this



man had nothing in common with them, and while he spoke of their rights and their grievances in pathetic language, the whole subject was as unreal to him as his last night's dreams. Neither assent or dissent was expressed to any of his propositions, until a hard, rebuking voice called out from the crowd—

“Let a’ be, let a’ be! thee knaws naught o’ uz, nor our needs. Let’s ha’ Dawson agen, or where’s Butterfield”—when Cyrus, with a smile on his face, quietly jumped down and made way for his successor.

Robert’s breast swelled. Oh, if Cyrus had been ever so mistaken, if he had only been true! But to bring his gay indifference into the midst of these living thousands, wrung out with misery, and to make pretence of teaching them and leading them, was a cruel, insensate mockery! The density of the crowd prevented any approach to him then, but in its dispersion he was sure to be able to reach him, so he stood quietly, listening and waiting, but the chief interest now centred on his brother.

The next speaker, Butterfield, was a large, coarse-looking man, whose vehement sentences had a certain ring in them of coming straight from his heart. Once or twice Dawson essayed to interrupt him, to calm him, but in vain. The temper of the people was with him, and he was immediately sensible of it. Perhaps it carried him further than he intended. Soon his blood was on fire, and the sparks flew from his lips. No meek preacher of the might of passive, patient resistance was this Butterfield; but a preacher of brute force, the strong hand, the *red* hand, if need be. Many a time had the like frothy invectives burst from Dawson, too, but it was in the presence of a different audience, and in a different place. In a room filled with curious hearers, who would criticise and go home to supper; when words were safe, however violent, from working immediate mischief. But the present was altogether another occasion. Thousands with hearts and lives in the matter, wearied out with suffering and bondage; men with no shadowy wrongs, no chimerical pains, but hunger fretting at their own vitals, and at the vitals of wives and children. Men, like tow, ready to kindle at the first spark.

Dawson stood up beside his associate, his mean, pallid features kindled into fervor, and cried out—

“One act of violence, one breach of law, and all is undone

that we have striven for three months to gain—the weight of public opinion on our side! Do not, do not lose your own cause.”

His voice was drowned in a storm of angry clamor and cries of “Butterfield, let’s hear Butterfield.” In no mischievous intent did this man begin his arguments, but his own vehemence acting on the people, and their heated approval—reacting upon himself, he went on after Dawson’s last interruption with more incautious and more dangerous themes. Robert Hawthorne became sensible that an evil spirit was stirring in the crowd, and that it would hardly disperse that night without some violence or outrage. A little matter precipitated it—some casual word dropped (the law failed afterward to disentangle the beginning of it, and amongst the many conjectures that rose, perhaps the true one was never hit upon).

Somebody mentioned Arklow Mills, and immediately it seemed as if that shibboleth was on every lip. While Butterfield was still speaking the mass of the crowd was in motion, and all at once with a shout hundreds ran down the river bank to the entrance of a narrow lane, parallel with the wide suburb through which they had reached the Marsh. Down this lane was the entrance to Arklow Mills.

Robert Hawthorne was swept on in the first impetus of the insurgent mass, but, quickly disentangling himself, he rushed to the inn where Lilian waited his return, forgetting, in his anxiety lest she should feel any alarm, that he was losing sight of his brother. Lilian had heard the first dreadful cry, and was gazing, white and tremulous, from the window at the turmoil, visible but incomprehensible, which was going on higher up the street, when he entered. Just at the same moment there was a loud shout from the lane at the back of the house, and the landlord came in to say that the mob were off to Arklow Mills, after no good, he was sure, but they would find themselves mistaken, for there had been soldiers there for the last hour and police in strong force, to prevent any mischief in case the meeting on the Marsh did not pass off quietly.

How to describe this passion-fevered and blinded people flinging themselves against their fate desperately is beyond my pen. A wild tumult, hoarse shouts of despairing defiance, efforts to disperse, hundreds massed inextricably in a

small space, sharp cracks of musketry—a few miserable lives ended.

In a quiet room of that old inn Robert Hawthorne saw these awaiting the coroner's inquest.

The poor fellow to whom he had spoken on the Marsh, his frail spark of life trampled out under the feet of his brothers in misery; not much change in his gaunt, white face, the anxious patience not lined out of it even by death, the trace on it of a last thought given to the "three little 'uns at home," and to the other that was saved alive in his dead arms.

An old man, one woman, three young men, a child of ten years old whom a shot struck by chance.

I know not what the finding of the jury was, but it should have been—"Done to death by felonious parsimony;" for whatever the immediate instrument of their ending, this was the guilt that prepared and directed it.

### III.

The day after, John Dawson, Thomas Butterfield, and Cyrus Hawthorne were in custody on the grave charge of inciting the riot whose consequences had been so disastrous. Robert Hawthorne remained in Millburn, attended the examinations before the magistrates, and saw his brother committed with the other two to take his trial at the next assize at Lancaster. After taking Lilian home again, and sending out George Sancton on the journey which for themselves had ended so painfully, he went to Lancaster, there to remain near his brother until the trial came on.

To find himself in such a position was a terrible shock to Cyrus Hawthorne. No ennobling sentiment of self-devotion in the cause gave him the fictitious support of patriotic glory. His most prominent idea was of his intense folly in engaging in it, and his blindness in never foreseeing this possible end to it. The further evils that might befall him were too real and prosaic to be shirked for a moment. The country was in panic at these risings amongst the people, execrated their leaders, demanded severe examples; it was just possible that he might have to pay with his life the forfeit of his incredible, preposterous absurdity. It is not every man who craves the crown of popularity who is ready to

accept its cross of martyrdom. John Dawson and Thomas Butterfield met their defeat like men who had risked it with their eyes open, and with less regret for what they might suffer in their own persons, than for what their cause must suffer; men who detested their principles felt a respect for their sincerity and self-abnegation. If Robert Hawthorne could have had any consolation in finding his brother in such a situation, it would have been that, like his companions in misfortune, he had deep convictions by which he could live or die nobly, if mistakenly; but one or two interviews with him were sufficient to put it beyond a doubt that all Cyrus felt in his emergency was the stupid blindness of his conduct hitherto, and the necessity of, to the utmost, striving to mitigate its consequences.

Sir Philip Nugent forgot in the critical position of his still dearest son that ever there had been dissension between them, and went to Lancaster to see him. He caused to be retained for his defence the best counsel, and with greater anxiety even than Robert, he also remained until the assizes come on; the six weeks that had to elapse aged him in appearance by ten years. He told Robert that he blamed himself for having driven Cyrus to extremity, and flung him amongst the associates whose dangerous principles necessity had urged him to espouse.

In the old house on the Minster hill there was burning impatience and restlessness too. Lady Leigh was in a state of angry distress, but the chief pain lurked in a younger, more passionate heart than hers. Poor little Lola had heard of Cyrus's calamity, and had asked Lady Leigh to receive her for a month's holiday, which her uncle Manuel reluctantly granted, when he found that her mind was too agitated for her to be of any service to him professionally. From her Lady Leigh gathered some details of Cyrus's recent life. Lola, a child in years, was no longer a child in feeling, though not yet woman enough to hide how she suffered. It was the greatest consolation she could find at this juncture to go into Maiden Lane, and sit all the long afternoons and evenings with Lilian. Lilian was a patient listener, unselfish and soothing—above all, hopeful; and when she learnt that Lola loved Cyrus, all her tenderest womanly sympathies became enlisted for her.

Her childish figure was grown more soft and exceedingly graceful; her face, if not beautiful, was most expressive and

touching. She would kneel down beside Lilian, and look up at her with great eyes swimming in tears, and ask the same question twenty times a day; "Oh! Lilian, do you think they will let him go? Do you think they will kill him?—good, beautiful Cyrus!"

How preach patience or resignation to those passionate unreasoning sentiments of hers? "If he dies, I will die too—oh! Lilian, I want to be near him; I want to comfort him! You don't know what I feel! your heart is so quiet," and then the slender brown hands twisted themselves convulsively, as if, in wringing out physical pain, the dumb heartache would be eased. Or some times she would sit low on the floor, clasping her knees, and with her face bowed down upon them for hours; then she would begin to tell of how Cyrus visited their cottage at Chelsea, and how happy she was when he came. She had an idea that he was more noble and great of heart than heroes of antiquity, and that his present sacrifice was voluntary, a sacrifice for which all good men should honor and reverence him for ever. Lilian felt no call to undeceive her; if her love converted Cyrus Hawthorne into a magnanimous patriot so much the happier for her; the truth would have been the death of her love and of all the sweet, holy, exalting delusions that hover over the first passion of a pure heart. I doubt whether one thought of the faithful little soul who was grieving and praying for him, ever troubled Cyrus in his prison; he was too much occupied with himself and his very uneasy prospects.

Lilian had another frequent visitor too in the person of young Lady Nugent. She would come into Walton Minster every day, with her tiny daughter sitting in the carriage beside her, would go to Lady Leigh, and ask a hundred questions impossible to answer, and offer suggestions equally fruitless. She avoided Lola, who always eyed her with jealous, suspicious resentment, but of Lilian she could ask, without any fear of being misunderstood, "Have you any tidings from Lancaster to-day? How does Cyrus bear his imprisonment? What do Harding and Stedman think of his case?" And Lilian would tell her any thing Robert might have written to her, and receive in return what Sir Philip Nugent had communicated to his wife. Phyllis had a fevered, sorrowful look all this time, which it was pitiful to witness. This anxious season of great dread, and the death

of her little blind son, had developed in her a softness and womanliness of character, such as only an unselfish suffering for others ever does. Nothing like a common sorrow for obliterating differences of state and station. These four women waiting for the fiat that should be pronounced upon Cyrus Hawthorne, had, as it were, but one heart and one interest. Also Sir Philip Nugent, his long-unforgiving son, old Hawthorne at Chinelyn, and poor Master Scrope, met on common ground, while their feelings hung on one common cause. A great grief is almost as hallowing in its effects as death; it levels down with its powerful hand all the little fictitious barriers men raise to fence themselves in from the rest of their kind, and shows them that in certain attributes of humanity all are equal for ever.

#### IV.

The trial came on and ended. John Dawson and Thomas Butterfield were sentenced each to seven years' transportation; Cyrus Hawthorne escaped with only two years' imprisonment.

Then came the violent revulsion of feeling in those who had suffered so much through their fears for him. Robert, Lola, and old Scrope experienced no desire to be angry with the culprit who had got off so easily; but Lady Leigh declared him not punished with sufficient severity; and even Sir Philip Nugent expressed a hope that the tedium of two years of prison life would open the young man's mind to sober reflection, and be an apprenticeship to a better course of conduct hereafter. Lola, Phyllis, and Lilian, felt that inexpressible exhilaration which, with some women, succeeds the removal of a great and painful pressure on their minds; so that for a time they actually felt as if some great good fortune had befallen them, over which they could laugh and cry for joy. Lola went back to her uncle, her concert exhibitions, and her hard practising; Phyllis invited agreeable company to Hadley Royal; and Lilian looked for Robert's coming home again with eager expectancy.

I don't know that one of them remembered to ask how it fared with the poor people at Millburn; their own tribulation, and now their own relief, was too lively and individual for the intrusion of any general questions. I may men-

tion, therefore, that the strike ended in the usual way. When the poor could bear and rebel no longer, they yielded and accepted the masters' terms.

Cyrus Hawthorne felt himself humiliated and persecuted; and in this curious view of his wrongs, he ran a risk of developing into one of those bolstered falsities which are known as Modern Patriots. His repentance over his folly, his undignified disgust at himself, were the secrets of his own breast; but outside the prison there were honest, deluded folk, who toasted his name until it became as sacred as John Dawson's or Thomas Butterfield's; and there were Sunday papers that endowed him with every personal and moral virtue under the sun. He bought his little martyrdom very cheap; all his popularity was well worth having, and would, no doubt, have been exceedingly precious had it only been sincerely deserved.

## V.

"Robert comes home to-night, Dorothea; I am waiting tea for him," said Lilian, as her ever-constant friend walked into the parlor in Maiden Lane, at an hour of the evening when most of the Walton tradespeople's households had finished that sociable meal. "Sit down in his chair, and talk to me until he comes. Oh! you don't know how long the days have been since he went away."

"But I guessed; and that brought me here again, though I saw you yesterday," replied Dorothea, divesting herself of bonnet and shawl, and ensconcing her comfortable face and figure in the master's peculiar chair. "How are you to-night, Lilian?"

"All the better for Robert's letter this morning; that is, quite brisk and blithe."

"You don't look so, fragile little thing; but I suppose one must take your own account of yourself. I have just come from seeing George's wife and her little lass; it has the most comical look of poor old Aunt Kibblewhite you ever saw."

"I have not been to look at it," replied Lilian, in a low, tremulous voice, and with a wistful tear-bright gaze into the fire. "I hope Polly will not think it unkind in me, Dorothea, but I *could* not."

"No, darling; she does not expect it of you; by and bye you will go."

"Hers is just the age that my baby was when she died. If you will come up-stairs, Dorothea, I have something that I want to send to Polly; perhaps you will take it with my love."

They went up to the spare room, once Mrs. Deborah Eliotson's, and from a shelf of the wardrobe Lilian drew out a beautiful little cloak of sky-blue cachemire, all richly embroidered with silken leaves and flowers by Lilian's own fingers.

"Lucy never wore it," said she, smoothing down the soft folds with a caressing hand; "*her* little things are all here." She opened a drawer and stood looking at the dainty garments made in the midst of such sweet hopes, fitting a tiny shoe upon her finger, thinking such thoughts as never come save to the hearts of mothers of dead children. "When I die, God will give me my darling into my arms again. Oh! surely He will, Dorothea!"

"Never doubt it, Lilian! don't fret, don't fret; come away."

"A few minutes, Dorothea. Oh, you cannot tell, you cannot tell the pain it was to give her up!" and the bereaved young mother laid her face down, with kisses, and tears, and smothered sobs, on the useless garments that once enfolded the tender limbs of her little one in heaven.

Dorothea had the water in her eyes, too; the baby had been her godchild.

"You must not let Robert find you crying when he comes home, Lilian," she said, at length, to check the flood of grief. "He was very sorry too. He will be tired and worn-out after all this anxiety for Cyrus, and a cheerful face will cheer him most of all."

"He has not had to complain of me. I have tried to be very good, and to keep the tears I could not help for when he was out of sight."

Dorothea lifted up her favorite's face, and kissed her as she used to do when she was only a child, and Lilian found the same consolation in her caresses as formerly. Hers was just the same warm, plastic, clinging, loving heart as ever; Dorothea's the same strong, faithful, reliable, comforting heart.

"I like to think, Dorothea, that in heaven will be the



carrying on and completing of what is good on earth," Lilian said, as they went down stairs again. "I think of my mother waiting for my father and me; even sometimes I fancy her with my baby, not much younger than I was when she left me. Is it very foolish to have such a real and human conception of heaven? I cannot help it if it is, Dorothea; and I hope it is not wrong, for it comforts me strangely; when I am alone I fall a-thinking of so many things. If I am rebellious, it comes into my mind; oh, if it had been Robert who had left me, what *should* I have done?"

"Ah, Lilian, when God sends grief, He sends strength to bear it; all of us have sorrow, but not the same sorrow."

"Your life seems to have been singularly free from it, Dorothea."

"We often make that mistake about people whom we think we know the best; but only ourselves can tell where our own shoe pinches."

Lilian was silent for a minute or two, and then she said, very gently—

"I have sometimes wondered, Dorothea, why you never married—so kind and pleasant, and such a favorite, as you always were."

"Thank you, Lilian; I'll tell you why; for the simplest reason in the world, because nobody ever asked me. From the beginning I was like my aunt Kibblewhite, cut out for an old maid."

"And you are the very dearest and nicest old maid that ever lived," said Lilian, and this time she kissed Dorothea with that tender compassionate air with which affectionate young wives always regard their single-blessed sisters. Dorothea took it in very good part, and always let herself be patronized by Lilian and her sister-in-law, Polly, as much as ever they liked.

Sitting by the fireside together, they continued their quiet womanly talk at intervals, while the hands moved round to half-past seven.

"Robert will not be long now; the coach is rarely behind its time," remarked Dorothea, applying the poker to the bright lumps of cannel coal, and rousing out a glorious blaze which flooded the old-fashioned room with light.

Lilian went to the window, put aside the curtain, and listened with her ear at the glass. She had not stood there five minutes before she heard the guard sounding his horn,

as the Highflyer, with its four reeking horses, dashed up to the Mitre in the Market-place.

"There is the coach coming in; he will be here in ten minutes now," exclaimed Lilian, and away she tripped to Betsy's domains, to watch that the partridges for Robert's supper were being done to a turn, and then up stairs to his dressing-room to give the fire an inspiring poke, and to see with her own eyes that the slippers and warm wadded gown, in which he chose to sit at ease when he came off a journey at night, were duly set to air. While she was absent Dorothea Sancton again donned her bonnet and shawl, and was standing ready to depart when Lilian reappeared, her cheeks softly flushed, her eyes brightened, her lips smiling unconsciously; as pretty a picture of a loving expectant little wife as ever waited yet to welcome anybody home.

"I think you do look better than you did, Lilian," said Dorothea, observing her kindly.

"Oh, yes; I shall soon be quite well and strong again. There's Robert!"

Dorothea had heard nothing, but Lilian had a quick ear for a footstep, and knew *his* a long way off.

She was on the doorstep to meet him and bring him in, to kiss his cold face, and disentangle his multitudinous wraps against the early autumnal frosts and east winds, and to make him feel to the innermost core of his heart, that, "be it ever so homely, there's no place like home."

"I have seen nothing half so pretty since I went away," said Robert; "nothing half so bright or delightful," taking her glad little face between his two long hands, and returning her warm kisses with interest.

"Where is Dorothea? she was here a minute since!" Lilian cried, when the first greetings were over. "How strange of her to run away—she must have stolen out when you came in—that is so like Dorothea."

She was gone, however, out of the room, and out of the house, sure in her own mind that they would never miss her.

"Oh, Robert, you look very tired!" Lilian said, pathetically, when they were by and bye sitting at tea.

"It was a terrible time of anxiety—terrible, Lilian."

"And poor Cyrus—you saw him to say good-bye?"

"Yes. He shows less sign of having taken his trouble to heart than any of us. Sir Philip Nugent went home really ill."

"But how will he get through the time, so restless and unquiet as he is?"

"Fall back by and bye on his old occupations, perhaps. Poor Cyr! poor Cyr!"

"Lola has been at Lady Leigh's: did he ever mention her to you?—the little thing was in dreadful distress."

"Lola! never a word; what of her?"

"She has known him so long, that she has learnt to love him."

"Cyrus never named her; his situation was so critical as to exclude every other thought."

Lilian made no answer; she was thinking of those sad, tearful eyes that used to look up at her so wistfully for hope and consolation while Cyrus was in danger, and of the faithful little heart in whose depth every pain he suffered thrilled with double force. She felt more indignant against Cyrus for this selfish forgetfulness than for every one of his other follies, extravagances, and errors.

"He will make many a heart ache," said she, after a pause.

Robert had not a word of blame for his brother.

"And he will have many a one to bear," was his response.

"You would pass through Millburn to-day—is it all quiet again?"

"Yes; and black and smoky as usual; every thing in the usual train, and the poor martyrs forgotten already."

Simon Hawthorne died at Chinelyn the week after the issue of Cyrus's trial was known, leaving all his money to his second wife, with the exception of a trifle to Robert and his brother, for the purchase of mourning rings. As this disposition of his property had been all along anticipated, it gave no disappointment and produced no ill-feeling.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

## THE COMMON LOT.

"L'éternité est une pendule, dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement, dans le silence des tombeaux: 'Toujours! jamais!—Jamais! toujours!'"  
 JACQUES BRIDAINE.

## I.

ST. WILFRED'S FAIR that year fell on a magnificent day, and old Nanny Brigget showed herself at her station as usual in the midst of her beautiful baskets of fruit; as usual, too, Dorothea Sancton came to make her early purchases, but this time in very limited quantities. The trade at the little tea-shop failed more and more, the annual dinner was now restricted to three guests, and Dorothea, with all her exact economy, had some difficulty to pay her rent and make both ends meet. Nanny had now abandoned her matrimonial hints, and asked Dorothea after her brother and sister, her nephew and niece, and friends instead of herself.

"An' I've had young Mrs. Robert Hawthorne already buying a few jargonelles that the old gentleman, her father, is fond of," said the ancient market-woman, who had a bit of gossiping time on hand, and was willing to employ it; "a very nice and kind-spoken lady she is—I don't know of another in the town I'm better pleased to see. But she don't look as well as she should, or may be it is the crape bonnet that misbecomes her pretty face."

"I don't think she is strong, Nanny, but she has been a good deal tried lately—the death of the old grandfather at Chinelyn, and the anxiety about her brother-in-law, and the loss of her little baby, altogether have been to much for her. But I hope to see her rally soon."

Nanny shook her head: "I tell you what, Miss Dorothy, she seems to me to be dwining away just as her mother did

afore her; and, what's more, I think Mr. Robert sees it, for he came along while she was here an' would carry her bit of a basket that a bairn o' five year old might ha' holden wi' one hand, as if he was afeard of her being tired wi' it. They went together to the hill corner, and there she took t' basket herself and went away laughing and nodding at him, as he stood a minute watching her like a man that's forgotten every thing else. Any thing happen to her people'll be real sorry for him, for he's fairly bound up in her—an' well he may, for she's as good as she's bonnie."

Dorothea stood grave and reflective, without speaking a word, while Nanny went on—"She's so kind to poor folk; I remember her last June when new potatoes was at eight-pence an' all the old ones gone, she was buying her week's things o' me when one o' them widows from the almshouses came up wi' her basket an' asked how potatoes was, an' when I telled her, she shook her head, as they was over-dear, and was going away, when Mrs. Robert puts her hand on her old basket an' says, 'Nanny give her a measure,' and pays me herself. I've seen her do that kind o' thing oft. You ask Mrs. Brown an' she'll tell you many's the time Mrs. Robert's come into her shop, an' taken away a couple o' pounds o' good meat for some sick woman in the lane; an' I've met her myself, as I've been coming home at night, coming back from seeing that poor lass at Kilham, who got into such sore trouble a while sin', and who, it's my belief, would ha' ended herself afore this but for what Mrs. Robert's done an' said for her. She's quiet over what she's about; but bless you, *we* know; an' I've thought often she's over-good to live long, though it's o' the like of *her* we have need when we're poor an' ill."

Dorothea nodded silently and walked away, but Nanny, looking up at her, saw the great tears rolling down her face.

"Ay," she said to herself, "an' Miss Dorothy sees it too."

Dorothea went in home and arranged herself behind the counter for the day's customers in a very absent, pre-occupied mood. There was a bright sun shining broad over the Market-place, which was all astir with the stall-keepers hanging out their wares, and the great trees about the Cross waved in majestic shadow above old Nanny and her companions. As Dorothea dreamily watched the familiar scene a thousand times and events floated back over her memory, Lilian, her pretty pet Lilian, vivid in them all; and while

she was thus thinking, the black clad figure of the young wife passed the window, paused at the door, and came in.

"Just for a five minutes' rest, Dorothea; how are you to-day?" said she, dropping into a chair beside the counter and leaning her elbow on it, while her lips parted breathlessly and her delicate color came and went like the wavering of sunshine through leaves. "So very little tires me now; I have but been up the Minster Hill to see my father," added she, after a pause, smiling at her weakness.

"Yes, Lilian; you must take care of yourself," replied Dorothea, helplessly. She would have liked to cry, only she dare not.

"Have you seen George since last night?" Lilian asked. "If not, I have news for you."

"Mr. Reuben Otley has consented to his getting a share in the business?" guessed Dorothea, brightening. "I am glad of it; it is nothing but right that Robert's will should rule. Polly will be made happy. And how about Mr. Constant?"

"He has a very small share too; that was harder than George's business, but Mr. Reuben Otley yielded at last. And now I have something else to tell; at the end of next month Robert and I are going away again; we are going to where Robert was born, I hope, or at all events somewhere near it. Dr. Sandford says it is a warmer climate for the winter, and that it will be good for me."

Dorothea turned away, and found something the matter with one of the tea-chests for ever so long—she could not speak; well she knew what this journey meant; she had heard such sentences of death pronounced before.

"What ails you, Dorothea?" asked Lilian, who divined from her silence that she was crying, "you are out of spirits; is the shop failing you more and more?"

"Yes; that is it," replied Dorothea, eagerly grasping at this pretext for her tears. "I'm sure I don't know where it will end; but let us go into the parlor, for I'm not fit to be seen if any body comes in. Jem, mind the shop."

Lilian sat down by the open window in Miss Kibblewhite's great arm-chair, and Mistress Prim came and wagged her tail in sign of welcome. Dorothea moved about restlessly for several minutes, as if she did not know what she was doing, until Lilian, to quiet her, made a commonplace remark

on the mignonette having done very well in the garden that year, when she sat down, sighing heavily.

"That is not like you, Dorothea; you used to cheer us all," said Lilian, kindly; "if the shop is failing, we shall not let you go with it."

"I know, Lilian; Lady Leigh has offered me the matron's place amongst her orphans, but I don't like to take it. A year or two since it might have suited me, but now I feel as if I were getting out of children's ways."

"Oh, Dorothea! you can never get out of kind and loving ways as long as you live. I think you would be very happy there."

"Ah! well, Lilian, we never know! The winter will be dull enough without you and Robert."

"But it will soon be over; you must not dwell on that; you have Polly to look after, and I must see her before we go."

They were both quiet for a minute or two, until the rustling of silk in the shop, and a beautiful voice, asking, "Is Miss Sancton within?" caused Dorothea to spring up and quit the parlor. Lilian recognized young Lady Nugent's manner of speaking, and the pretty lisp of her little daughter, who accompanied her.

"We have come to buy fairings, have we not, Sylvie?" said Lady Nugent; "and to ask Dorothea to let us sit in her window this afternoon, when we have dined with grandma."

"Yeth, Doddotea, is 'our 'itte dod here? I want to see her."

And in quest of Prim in toddled a small fairy in white muslin, blue sash, and golden curls. Lady Nugent followed to coax her back, and stopped a few minutes to speak to Lilian.

"I am sorry to hear your own health is delicate," she said, gently; "Lady Leigh tells me you are to seek change for the winter. I hope it will be of benefit to you." She moved away with a gracious bow, then came back, offered her hand, and finally her lips. "You are much changed, Lilian," said she, and her soft blue eyes looked for a moment as if there were tears in them; "but you will get well soon, we hope."

When she was gone, Dorothea remarked that Lady Nugent's manner was very uncertain. "She is quite the great

lady one moment, and the next she kisses you like a sister." Lilian gave no reply: perhaps she understood Lady Nugent better than Dorothea did.

"Now I must go home—Robert will think me an idle little gad-about," said she, by and bye; "but I like the fresh morning air; it gives me more strength for the day. What a useless creature I am becoming in the world!" They passed through into the shop, and just at the moment Robert came in sight. Jem was sent to call him in, that Dorothea might thank him for her brother, and Lilian would then have had him go on his business, whatever it was, but he said, no, not until he had taken her home. It was well she had his arm to lean on. More eyes than Dorothea's watched her sorrowfully as she went, sad to see the feeble and weary slowness of the little feet that were taking some of their last steps on a road which God had made so smooth and bright for them that they might well reluctantly linger unwilling to leave it.

## II.

Perhaps to those around her one of the most pathetic features of Lilian's state was her own apparent utter unconsciousness of any thing seriously amiss. She was always to be better on the morrow, if she could be induced to acknowledge herself not very well to-day, but generally her answer to all inquiries was brisk and cheerful; and those to whom she was most dear felt obliged to be cheerful too, to maintain the innocent delusion.

Dr. Sandford had been again consulted by Lady Leigh, but he did not stir from his first verdict. Lilian's disease was mortal—its issue was only a question of time, of a few months, more or less—according to the rapidity of its progress. Robert and Dorothea knew this immediately it was suggested that she should be taken into the south for the winter, and what Robert was obliged secretly to suffer in the anticipation of this inevitable grief no tongue can tell. They kept it from her father, who, though he had watched every deadly symptom of consumption wasting his own nearest and dearest once before, seemed mercifully blinded to the fate which was hanging over his daughter. He spent many evenings in Maiden Lane during the last month that they were at home, just as happy and easily pleased as ever;



he was rather dismal at the prospect of a winter without either Robert or her, but always wound up his grievance with a pleasant looking forward to the spring, when they would come back with Lilian, please God, quite well.

Lady Leigh and both the Ladies Nugent visited her several times, and once came Sir Philip himself with his little daughter Sylvie by the hand carrying a present of fresh grapes. Robert on this occasion saw his father alone for a long while; a better feeling had been established between them since Cyrus fell into trouble, but Robert's circumstances were such now as to make Sir Philip's profuse offers of help unnecessary. Poor Lady Leigh's black brows almost met over her eyes whenever she saw her old favorite—she always frowned dreadfully when she was afraid of betraying any emotion—and on one of these occasions she gave Lilian a piece of information which seemed unnecessary and startling at the time, but which afterward she came to look upon in a different light.

"I have been putting a codicil to my will," said she, abruptly; "and I have left your father an annuity for his life that will make him easy if he should ever have to leave the Minster."

"Oh! Lady Leigh, has he not Robert and myself?" cried Lilian, surprised, and rather grieved at what seemed implied.

"There is no harm done, my dear; we never can tell what may happen, and I thought it would please you to know that he was well provided for; now let us talk of something else; don't be grateful! I cannot bear it!" The old lady's manner was harsher and more peremptory than usual, and, not being able to control it, she went home; those who did not know her might have thought her in a dreadful fit of ill-humor, but Lilian knew she was only in distress at losing her.

Two or three days before they were to go, Dorothea Sancton went down to Maiden Lane and found Lilian "setting her house in order." A capital little housekeeper she had always been since her beginning, with such tidy store-closets, and such ingenious contrivances for domestic thrift and comfort as are the real delight of many women. Betsy was in attendance on her, listening to directions and surreptitiously wiping away her tears. Dorothea felt sorely inclined to sympathize with her.

"What are you crying about? Don't cry, Betsy, but attend to what I am showing you," Lilian said, touching one of the servant's rough red arms very kindly. Betsy sobbed and fixed her glazed eyes on the great linen chest, in a compartment of which Lilian was pointing out the reserve of lint and old linen for any poor body who needed them in case of accidents, and bundles of clothes duly folded and ticketed that were to be given away at Christmas.

"I would have asked you to do this for me, Dorothea, and to take charge of the mother's basket which Fanny Rabbits has just now, but I think it will be a little amusement for Betsy," Lilian began to say when the sobs became audible. "But if she wants any help or direction, you will let her come to you?"

There is nothing pathetic in preserves, pickles, or miscellaneous grocery stores, but as Lilian opened her many-shelved closets and told Betsy which were to be used in her absence, which were to be given away, and which were to be spared, Dorothea could have cried aloud. When the young mistress had finished her task, she paused a moment, and then said, in a very low but steady voice—

"And, Betsy, if I should *not* come home with your master in the spring, you must tell him what we have been used to do for Widow Mary and the rest; mind they have their quarters of a pound of tea regularly, for they think so much of it. Remember, Betsy, I trust you."

For all answer Betsy cast her checked apron over her head and cried more bitterly than ever.

"It is so foolish to cry, Betsy," said Lilian, reprovingly; "I am afraid you will forget half of what I have been telling you."

"No, missis; that I shan't!"

"Then be a reasonable girl. I have told her she is to have her sister in the house while we are away, so she need not feel dull."

"Missis, you are walking and talking yourself off your feet!" exclaimed Betsy, in a sudden outbreak of temper behind her screen; "Miss Dorothy, will you take an' make her lie down?"

"Come into the old nursery, Dorothea; the sun shines in there so pleasantly of an afternoon," Lilian proposed, and thither accordingly they adjourned.

This was the last time Lilian and Dorothea had a long talk together. It was a very fine September day, and the

far-off woods were already tinged with russet in the declining sun.

"Next year at this time!" exclaimed Lilian, looking over to them wistfully.

"Next year at this time, if it please God, all will be well," replied Dorothea, with a quiver in her voice.

"I hope so, Dorothea; it would be a sad blow to Robert if he were to lose me, and I am so happy that life is become very dear to me," said Lilian, solemnly. "I see you looking all of you sorrowful though you try to hide it; but I do not feel *very* ill—I am sure I pray God not to part us so soon; though what I have been doing to-day seemed as if I were making ready to leave it all, and come home no more."

"My darling, darling! if it makes you sad, do not let us talk about it;" and Dorothea went down on her knees and encircled Lilian in her arms.

"*If* it makes me sad! oh! Dorothea, have I not what would make it hard to die? and it *does* make me sad, for I want to stay with Robert. I remember one time when I should have been rather more glad to die than live, but that was when I was not happy; but I do think, and hope, and pray that I may be spared yet awhile."

"I am not wise, Lilian; I can't feel and talk about these solemn things as some do, but don't you agree with me that it is right to say 'God's will be done,' and to try to believe that, whatever it proves to be, that will is better than our own?"

"Yes; it is *right*, Dorothea, but it is not always easy."

"Not easy at first; but though it may be hard at the time, afterward I think we generally see that it was best not only for those who are gone before, but for those also who are left behind. I felt it very much giving up Aunt Kibblewhite, but often I am thankful now, for if she had lived with the business falling off, as it had begun to do, we must have separated, and she would have had to come to poverty—a thing she had never known in all her life."

Lilian made no answer to this, perhaps she did not see the justice of the parallel; she fixed her soft eyes upon the distant river, glancing amidst the fields, and thought of Robert, of her lost child, of her unknown mother, of her poor old father who had nobody but her. Lilian was quite right in saying she had much to live for, and that it was hard to leave it all, even were it God's pleasure. It is beyond hu-

man vision to see the why and because of the separation death makes between those who love each other, and our hearts cannot always acquiesce religiously in the almighty act. We do not perceive the need for it—we can only quiver and sob over our bleeding wound, and be patient until time stanches it; some time, perhaps, if not here then elsewhere, we shall learn to see clearly, and to acknowledge that the very act that seemed most meaningless and needless in the passing, was the key of a blest future, the opening to us of the treasures of a merciful and tender God. But of all the speculations that bewilder us while we are disentangling our clue of life, there are none more vain, none more hopeless of solution, than those which tempt us to question Providence of the reason of this or that event; when we have rebelled and striven our hardest—when we have mourned through the days of darkness, and risen up again under the burden that has been laid upon us—the only staff that is strong enough to help us forward—the sweetest draught of consolation we can take—is still in turning to the place where we might have found both at first, and saying as poor Dorothea suggested—“God’s will be done.”

### III.

On a morning very bright and warm for the time of year, Lilian and Robert left their home. Smiling and cheerful to the last, she left a kindly recollection on all who assembled at the door in Maiden Lane to say good-bye. Peter Carlton and Dorothea were there, and Betsy, incapable with crying; Mr. Reuben Otley and his poor, twisting, uncomfortable nephew, John, who had the humiliated affection of a despised and beaten turnspit for Robert and his wife; George Sancton, and Mr. Constant, and Polly, and Nanny Brigget, in a fever of hurry, with four peaches in a straw basket lined with leaves, and a great bunch of grapes to refresh Lilian on her journey. Lady Leigh’s cloak was in requisition, and Lilian’s pale, languid face shone against it as a white rose shines in a cup of dusky leaves. So many hand-shakings, and kisses, and last words, had to be exchanged, that poor Robert looked quite wan and distressed long before they were over, but he could not bear to hurry her away, espe-

cially from poor Peter, whose anticipations of their return were loudly and frequently expressed.

But at last they were off, Lilian waving her little hand to the top of the lane, where stood widow Mary and another old woman, to courtsey their respectful wishes for her coming home again. As they went by the corner where the sculptor's shop was, John stopped his chisel, looked out furtively and shook his grey head, as though he would say he did not hope to see *her* ever again; and coming to Lady Leigh's garden door, there was she leaning on her stick, with her sister and Mistress Alice Johnes, and Hilton, and Sempronius in the background. Lady Leigh put up her face to be kissed for the only time that Lilian had ever seen it wet with tears, but scarcely a word was said, and as the chaise drove on again, Lilian, sighing, exclaimed—

"I am glad it is over, Robert; I don't like these good-byes." Not immediately receiving an answer, she bent forward to look at his face, which was half turned away, and saw that it was all moved and a-quiver with pain. "Robert!" said she, laying her hand softly on his, "Robert, what is the matter?"

"I think," replied he, brushing something from his eyes, "I was touched to see how much of tender love my little wife had won."

He drew the warm cloak close about her, and made her rest upon his arm, where she by and bye fell asleep, rather weary with the last hour's excitement; leaving to him the mournful contemplation of her dear face, which, when the play of expression was still, the eyes closed, the tender lips folded and mute, showed the pale ravages of mortality the more sadly. Its exquisite, flower-like loveliness was faded, but to Robert's eyes it was as the face of an angel.

The early autumnal day shone over their journey until they stopped for the night at a quiet country inn, about whose porch there was a grand clustering of honeysuckle and late-blooming roses.

"When we are rich enough, Robert, you and I must live in a flowery cottage something like this—shall we?" said Lilian, laughing, as she went into the low arched passage, from which opened on either side a homely parlor, whose window-sills were filled with plants. "I have often thought I should like to live in a cottage near Redbank, where we could see the river and the fields, and have a

garden like a little cup full of flowers; should you like it, Robert?"

Robert said he should like it very much, and, though his thoughts must have been with quite different issues, he encouraged her to talk of this happy future: I believe they even settled the exact spot where the little Elysium was to be, designed it, grew a grove of trees about it, and pictured themselves living there up to a tranquil old age—all in that single evening before they went to rest.

#### IV.

Robert Hawthorne would have preferred the Manor Farm to any other place, as a temporary home for Lilian, but at the death of his grandfather, it had passed into quite strange hands, so he took lodgings in a pretty thatched cottage, which was nestled in a sunny hollow of the landslip at Arbon. There was a garden round it, in which, to Lilian's admiration, flourished plants such as hitherto she had only seen tendered in greenhouses: fuchsias grown into trees, as high as the cottage; hydrangeas and myrtles in luxuriant bushes. An interval of deliciously soft and warm weather followed their arrival, during which she could sit under the rustic verandah, and watch the sea, and the ships, and the play of the clouds, in indolent calm enjoyment. It was all new to her; pleasant, beautiful, tranquilizing, revivifying too, like the beginning of a new life. She rallied so amazingly for a little while, that Robert took heart, and in his earlier letters home, gave every body hope that she would ere long be perfectly restored.

It was such happiness to him to believe it! They used to take walks together amongst the fairy wildness of the landslip, over toward Winchcombe, where the summer seemed to be still lingering, loth to quit so much loveliness at the warnings of chill autumnal winds that night and morning breathed over the downs. Often, too, Lilian was able for a longer excursion, and then a shaggy black pony, named Brisk, belonging to the mistress of the house, was put into requisition. Brisk was a well-meaning, though sometimes willful little fellow, and carried her up and down the hills, with Lady Leigh's cloak about her, many and many a sunny day, accommodating his moods to hers with singular amia-

*bility*; it was not every one that Brisk would allow to go near him, but he took a great fancy to Lilian's pleasant voice and caressing hand, and let her mount him whenever she liked. Perhaps one or two of Lilian's own letters will give the fullest and clearest account of this period. The first I shall choose is to Dorothea Sancton:

“DEAREST DOE,

“It is Sunday afternoon, and Robert has left me to go to church, by which you will know that I am very well to-day—I am *wonderful*, I believe you would hardly know me, though we have only been here a fortnight. It is a pretty place—I cannot tell you how pretty, but I am not sure that I should like it, for a continuance, as well as the wilder and bolder outlines of our northern country. But there are bits like fairy-land—lovely little vignettes that I should delight in showing to you. And there is the sea—the sea that is always beautiful! Robert thinks there can be nothing in the world to equal it, but we have neither of us been great travelers, you know, and ought to be modest in giving our opinion. I must tell you where we have been—but first, let me introduce Brisk. Brisk is a pony, black, rough, crusty, and of a very independent mind, but by letting him go at his own pace, and occasionally stop for five minutes to botanize in the hedge-row, I have succeeded in establishing a perfect understanding with him. Wrapped up in Lady Leigh's old cloak, and perched on my little friend's broad back—he is absurdly fat—I have been over the down, from the top of which, as it was a most glorious day, we had a view so rich, and sweet, and varied, that I despair of describing it to you. Will you try to fancy it from my bald outlines? Fancy a wide grassy sweep all round, melting into sloping fields, divided by hedges and belts of wood, a wide valley softened with dim haze, dotted with villages and churches, and lines of distant hills, with white chalk patches breaking their uniform darkness. Beyond them the blue sea-line, and the Hampshire coast—on every side the beautiful sea, as still and blue that day as any of our lakes that we have up in the north. I think Robert could almost have gone down on his knees and kissed the ground, he seems to love it so. I was very tired when we got home, but the day after was quite equal to another ride, and we went to Chinelyn, where we dined at the rectory. Oh, Do-

rothea! did you ever see a woman who seemed to you without one selfishness, one hardness, one vanity? Mrs. Ford is such a woman; she is *good*: I never thought any one could be so loving and perfect as she is. The dearest face, very frail and delicate, suffering even, but pure and sweet—I should wish to be like her, if it were possible, but it is not. I believe what gives her this angelic loveliness, is that her mind is far more in heaven than on earth. And yet she is so kind to all about her, patient and charitable, and not in the least bigoted, as I have sometimes felt very good people were; she is severe for herself, but most tenderly considerate to all others. It will be good for me, whether I am to live or die, that I have known her. She comes to see me often, and talks to me so that I could listen for ever—she is the only person I ever knew who seemed to anticipate and realize the blessed hopes we have given us in our Lord; I cannot feel them near to my heart as she does, but when I tell her so, she just kisses me and says, ‘They will come to you in His good time,’ and always leaves me feeling lifted up, and happier in my mind, and with more resigned thoughts if it should be, indeed, that Robert and I must part. I like the rector too, but in his goodness there is a little of that austerity that awes me. Mrs. Ford took me down the Chine, which is pretty, but not so grand as I used to imagine from Robert’s descriptions, and I saw besides the old schoolhouse, and the Manor Farm at a distance, but I was not permitted to go to it that day for fear of being over-tired: I must tell you more about them, and about my funny little doctor, the next time I write. My kind love to all who inquire for me, and I am improving nicely. How does Betsy manage without us? she is a good girl, and was very thoughtful for me. I shall leave my letter open for Robert to add a few lines when he comes home; and now good bye.

“Your affectionate

“LILIAN HAWTHORNE.”

Robert’s postscript was merely a brief repetition of the great amendment there was already in Lilian’s looks and health.

The next letter, written to her father, is not quite so promising.



"MY DEAR FATHER,

"ROBERT has written you more at length than I feel quite equal to to-day, but I cannot let his letter go without a little scrap from me. I was very glad to hear that Lady Leigh had visited you to exhibit my last letter to her, though there was nothing in it that I had not already told you, because I know the kindness would please you; Robert says you must not trouble yourself with poor John Otley, but I know it is not a trouble to you to be kind to any body who is unhappy, and I think he has no friends that care for him beside ourselves; I feel so very, very sorry for him, and I think, after he has conducted himself so well during the last four years, and shown himself always grateful to Robert, his early crime should be passed out of remembrance as much as possible. I hope his uncle will take him into his house again by and bye. It has been spoken of amongst us more than once, but the old man does not easily relent or forget the disgrace. My last excursion with Master Brisk was along the Undercliff to St. Leonard's. There is a tiny church there that I think could be put entire into your organ-loft, and by the wayside a well of delicious cold spring-water—I wished it had been some fairy well which would at a draught have renewed my strength. These are real November days just now, chill and raw with east winds, but also with sunny gleams about noon. I am to keep indoors, my little doctor says, and Robert will have me obedient. My doctor is clever, and good, and kind, but I should not like to have to rely on him in an emergency, for he never visits a patient except in full dress, and with his whiskers curled like the finest roll of a coachman's state wig—at least so our little gossip says, and from my own observation it must be true. Robert has twice tried to take the pen out of my hand, so now, dear, dear father, I must say good bye and put it down. I am *better* than I was when I left home but not *quite* so well as during our first fortnight here."

December was a fine open month, and about Christmas there were a few days like a foretaste of spring. Lilian had fallen back fast and fatally; for that brief rallying of her strength had proved delusive. At this time she wrote again to Dorothea, and there is a sensible change in her tone of expression; she who had been loving and gentle always becomes humble and clinging in her affection.

"DEAREST DOROTHEA,

"I have not written to any one for a week, but to-day Robert does not forbid; so after a little letter to my father I will write another for you. How am I? you ask in your last. No better—not much worse; I suffer sometimes, and then I revive, but not for long. I begin to think sometimes I shall never see Walton, or my father, or any of you, any more, and then I wish I had never left you. It is rather sad to me to think I may die away from home, and not be buried where my baby is—I dare not say so to any one but you. Oh! I think Robert will almost break his heart! He is so good and watchful over me—I blame myself that I have never been able to love him enough, or to show him how I loved him. And who will comfort my poor, poor father? But if it is to be, I will try to say what you told me, Dorothea, though it is hard, very hard, even. You do not know how dear and precious you all seem to me—even some for whom I did not care much before—now that we are, perhaps, near to part. Latterly, I have seen Mrs. Ford almost every day; she never comes but she comforts me; when she is with me we send Robert out for a walk, otherwise he will not leave me even for a moment. Yesterday, while he was out, she began to tell me what a lovely character his mother was, and many little things about her that I liked to hear, because I recognized in them something that was like my Robert. When he came in, he brought some primroses that he had gathered in the sunny hollow of the landslip. I was so foolish I could not help crying over them—oh! Dorothea! the primroses on Redbank and the violets in the copse, am I never to see them any more? I have not been out now for ten days, but to-morrow Robert promises me a little walk in the garden when the sun shines."

This letter ends abruptly with two words from Robert, who had stopped the writer, signed, folded, and directed it himself. These little tyrannies he had to exercise often, for Lilian always would do too much when she got leave to do any thing.

"DEAR BETSY,

"The account you wrote us of how you go on at home, pleased your master and myself very much. I should like you to walk to Kilham and tell Jane Dawson how glad I

am she has got a place again; you may go to Harvey's and choose a warm winter shawl for yourself, which I give you for a New-Year's gift, and at the same time get one for Jane; I fear she is not very respectably clothed, but as she goes only into a plain service, she will not need such things as formerly. Tell her that I am glad her mother will keep the boy, and you must carry a little of something to her—a parcel of tea and some rice; if the child is in need of a little frock and cape, give Jane my plaid woolen dress to make up for him; I shall never wear it any more. No, dear Betsy, I feel now that I said good-bye to you all for the last time, and that it is not the will of God that I should ever return home again. When your master comes home he will be alone; so I hope, dear Betsy, you will be very good to him; there are so many little things for his comfort that I used to attend to which will then rest with you—I am sure you will remember them. I feel very sorry often to leave you all, but it is only for a little time, and then we shall meet where there are no more partings. I hope you will be happy, whether you go to a home and husband of your own by and bye, or whether you spend your life in service; I have to thank you, which I do from my heart, for your faithful service to me from the day your master brought me home after we were married; it will be a comfort to you now, to remember that ever since then you have been a comfort to me, especially when Lucy died; and I have never forgotten the white violets you went through the wet to gather in the copse to lay on her innocent breast. I did not think then that I should see her so soon again. For a keepsake in memory of me, I will send you my little old Bible, in which I have marked some verses for you to read. When you read them, I think they will perhaps make you feel as if I were not gone so very far away. Give my love to widow Mary and the rest, and don't grieve, dear Betsy; and think of your master as I have told you.

“Your affectionate mistress,

“LILIAN HAWTHORNE.”

This was the last letter Lilian ever wrote. Until the day before, she had been left in the hopeful uncertainty which was incidental to her disease; and every body about her, Robert especially, had dissimulated their fears. Oh, what he suffered when he saw that he must give her up! His

whole heart rose insurgent against the cruel decree; why was his life to be deprived of the glory of her love? Heaven *might* have let him keep her—she was *all* he had!

“I am very young, and we have been so happy, Robert!” she said to him, one evening, almost weeping; “why must I die?” It was such a pitiful question—“We have been so happy, Robert; *why* must I die?”

He kissed away her tears, and said perhaps God would spare her to him, and even to that *perhaps* she clung with revived hope. Mrs. Ford thought it was wrong to deceive her, for each day now saw some swifter failing in her little strength—any hour the messenger from Heaven might come. One afternoon she had been into the sunny shelter of the garden for a few minutes, and when she came in and was laid down on the couch she almost fainted. Mrs. Ford was there at the time, and after she revived Robert left them together and went down upon the windy shore where a turbid sea was rolling heavily in. Twilight fell ere he returned; Mrs. Ford was then gone, and Lilian was alone; it was almost dark in the room, but the fire gave out a ruddy glow, by which he saw a peaceful expression on her unconscious face, for she had fallen into a quiet sleep. As he drew near and leant over her she woke and opened her eyes with a smile—he perceived at once a change in her.

As he knelt down beside her she put one of her frail little hands round his neck and whispered, in a hushed and solemn voice, “Oh, Robert, Robert, I am going to leave you——”

“Lilian!”

“Ah! Robert, you knew and never told me! I am very sorry; we have been so happy, and I loved you so.”

Robert hid his face upon her breast; already, *already* she thought of this happiness and this love as of things passed away.

“Nay, Robert, don’t cry, don’t cry——” but she mingled her tears with his.

Ah! me, what depths of unavailing tenderness there lie in human hearts! depths that are never plumbed until the heavy millstone of a great grief is dropped into them by the hand of God, and the eddies that widen and spread to the verge of the shores of life settle back into silence and stillness as it sinks down into the darkness where no light penetrates but the love of our Father in Heaven!

## V.

It appears that the certainty of her approaching death gave Lilian calmness and strength. The day after she wrote short farewell letters to her father, to Lady Leigh, to Dorothea, and that longer one to Betsy which has been given.

Mr. and Mrs. Ford visited her again, and when they were gone she lay down, and Robert sat by her holding one of her hands: she dozed for half an hour or more, opening her eyes at intervals to smile at him and see that he was still there. As it was darkening she began to speak to him of many things, of her father, of Lady Leigh, and every one whom she loved.

"I wish I had died at home," said she by and bye; "I should have liked to be buried in the churchyard with wee Lucy, where now and then you could have come to look on my grave. Where will they bury you, Robert, when you die, I wonder?"

"I shall think of you in heaven, Lilian, not here."

"But you will not forget my grave—it will be beside your mother's."

"Oh! my darling, peace!"

"Poor Robert!"

Three days later, about the same hour, Mrs. Ford was with them again, and the good woman went away comforted, and told her husband that it had rejoiced her heart to see that Lilian could think and speak now of something beside Robert! the strong ties of human love were being gently loosened by the winning of the love Almighty.

All that night Robert sat and watched; it was a night without moon or stars, and he heard the sighing of the waves on the shore all through its stillness. Lilian slept much and seemed not suffering but unconscious, even when her shadowy eyes opened upon his face. Death was in the room with him then, waiting the supreme moment.

Toward morning she looked up with a flash of intelligence, half lifted the hand lying white upon her breast, and said, "Oh! Robert, the light is coming!" and ere it fell the light was come!

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

## THE DAYS OF MOURNING.

"BREAK, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O sea,  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead,  
Will never come back to me."  
TENNYSON.

## I.

THEY buried Lilian one showery February afternoon in the pretty little churchyard where Robert's mother lay—only a sod divided the two graves. The service over, priest and people gone, Robert, in a stupor of sorrow, flung himself beside it bitterly weeping. To leave her—*her* whom his love could never guard too tenderly—alone in the rain and the cold, alone with the heavy earth upon her breast,—ah! it was cruel, cruel! How sweet, how lovely, how gentle, she had been! how good and thoughtful always for others, how most dear and precious of all to him! No more sweet kisses, no more soft, loving, petulant words; where the sunshine of her youth and happiness had been, nothing more for ever but a cold, blank silence.

He had a dream that night, in which he saw her as he saw her once long ago, gathering posies in Lady Leigh's garden; she had a child by one hand, and a great heap of many-hued blossoms gathered up in the other arm; her face was happy, and she went on step by step culling others, until he lost sight of her in a thick grove, where he thought he could hear her begin to sing as she disappeared. Every sense stretched toward the voice dying in the distance, he awoke—awoke to find himself alone, and no sound but the waves breaking on the shore in the gray of the morning. He sprang up and went away to look at the grave again, and

found it covered with a white frost. Oh! could the pure spirit in heaven hear the sad outcry of his bereaved heart?

What sorrow was like this sorrow, what loss like this loss? His whole life stripped of its joy! If the passionate grief overcame the long obedience, the One who has tasted human suffering and carried the remembrance of it to heaven will plead his pardon; it is not for us, weak, less tried, or less feeling, to condemn such anguish as a blind rebellion. God knows, and only God must judge!

Every thing in his vision had taken a strange dimness and unreality: death often spreads this veil between us and life, while the first solemnity of his visit is upon us; and how hard and repulsive are the outlines of our existence when it is withdrawn! Robert went back to see Brisk looking over the garden hedge from his paddock for the bits of bread Lilian used to send him out at breakfast time; to see a sheaf of letters lying on the table; to hear that Dr. Warley had stopped on his way to a patient to inquire after him; to see, in fact, the life that was yet to be lived already claiming him from the life that was closed. He fed the pony, which pressed its head against his arm, and turned its wilful eye toward the window for the pretty face that was not peeping out at him any more; he glanced over his letters (one of them contained tidings of the sudden death of Lady Leigh), and read one or two without any impression of their sense; he ate his tasteless meal, and thought of the day that was before him.

In all the vigor, courage, and beauty of his being, his days scarcely at their meridian, and yet all their inexpressible grace and charm gone, the future stretched long before him, but the hopes that once he had woven about it were all vanished like the bright dew from the morning grass. In this future he would nobly bear his part, toiling and waiting and looking forward: but it had no more sweet scenes of happy love, no sunny hours of perfect content, where he could wish the day to stand still. He knew what he had lost, and felt it in all its intense bitterness.

Mr. Ford visited him that afternoon, and Robert walked back to Chinelyn with him to see his wife. In returning home he loitered long by the way, passing his life in calm review.

There was a wan mist over the down, the bare black plantations were softened in outline by it; the antique grace of the elms that bordered the roadway, and the long drooping

boughs of the great ash-trees pencilled against the sky, had a weird majesty of aspect in the haze. The road bridged over the chine, and he stopped there, leaning over the mossy old stone wall, and looking down upon the babbling rivulet, whose broken stony banks were draperied by a luxuriance of fern, and shadowed by tall slender shoots of birch and hazel. What a sweet spot this had once been to him! what a sweet spot it was still! He stood there so long gazing on the long enamelled leaves that clung to every clod and rock, that the mist hanging over the uplands came down upon them too, and they were dim. Turning his head he could see the great thatched barns, the grey walls and steep roof of the old Manor, where he had lived as a lad. He had promised to bring Lillian there some day, and show her his mother's room, but the time and the opportunity had never come, and *now* it was too late. He went down to the fold-yard gate and looked across it; there were some young oxen trampling knee-deep in the straw, some corpulent black pigs rooting, and a fine liver-and-white dog dozing, with his muzzle on his paws and one eye open at the door of the cart-horses' stable. Robert was seized with a longing to walk over the old house, and, crossing the farmyard, he entered the garden—the bonny, shady garden where Cyrus and his mother and he had had such happy times. The great stone vases were still there, with the heavy golden moss thick-clothing their rims; snowdrops in white lines, primroses in red, and purple, and yellow tufts, just where Mary Hawthorne planted them; and the scented violets in the nooks about the door where the sun shone warm as May in genial winter days.

He stood upon the steps of the door some time before he ventured to knock, and when he did, it was long in being opened; but at length a short, comely-faced woman appeared, and gave him admittance, though she said it was not customary for strangers to wish to see the house—indeed, there was nothing in it worth the trouble. Robert scarcely heard her as he followed through the chill, heavily-wainscoted best rooms—well he remembered them; distinctly his memory repeopled them with the gone-by generation of his early life. Almost he expected to hear Cyrus's imperative voice, calling up the wide old stairway, and his mother responding to her favorite son from her little room looking over to the sea.

“These are what were the state apartments, sir, when the



lords of manor lived in the house themselves," said the mistress.

Robert started out of his reverie.

"There is another room to the east that I should like to see," he replied, absently.

"We don't use it ourselves. You know the house, then, sir?"

"I was born here—my mother died in that room."

"Sir, you shall see it."

Up the six sunken steps into the dear little old room! The mist was in there too, but he could just see that it was the same; the same paper on the walls, the little swing bookcase hanging in the recess, and out of the window that glorious view of down, and glen, and wood, and ever-living sea, on which the fading eyes of his darling mother had looked with never-fading love. The mistress of the house stood outside the door until he came out, and then silently followed him down stairs. She remembered him now as Robert Hawthorne, and had heard at the parsonage that he had just lost his young wife; but she made no allusion to either circumstance, and merely said, with great kindness, as he was going away—

"If you are remaining in the neighborhood, sir, and would like to come in the garden at any time, you are quite free to do so."

Robert shook his head, thanked her, and walked away.

It was almost dark by the time he had recrossed the down, but he went up the rugged lane by the church to look at Lilian's grave again before seeking the light of fire and candle, and the warm house-shelter for himself. And once more, when the moon was up and the stars shining in the sky, and again while the morning was gray and chill, day by day and night by night his steps continually directed themselves thither, until, when his tall dark figure and woe-worn face came in sight, the poor folks would look away that he might not feel himself observed, and say to each other wonderingly, 'How he must have loved her.' He was in no haste to be gone from the place—in no haste to put away the remembrance of his love, his loss, and his sorrow. The grass was growing green upon her grave, and the white rosebuds trailing over it and the little headstone, before he could gird up his mind to go back to the labor and trouble of the homely life which her love would never cheer or brighten more!

## II.

Robert did not warn his people when he should return, but one evening when Dorothea Sancton was sitting behind her counter, she saw him crossing the Market-place, and cried out—

“Surely that is Robert Hawthorne!”

Her brother George had come in to talk over her affairs with her and saw him too.

“Ay,” said he, it is a sorrowful coming home for him, poor fellow! What would become of me if I lost Polly? We won’t let him see us, Doe, for by his coming back without letting us know, he wants to be alone at first, and no wonder.”

“Poor Robert!” murmured Dorothea, and she could give no more thought to any thing concerning herself that night.

Betsy started when her master appeared at his own door, but she looked a sorrowful welcome at him as he came in and entered the parlor. Every day she had set it in order, dusted and arranged in its customary place each little nick-nack that had been appropriated to Lilian’s use as if she were coming back any hour. Robert looked round, and then sat down gravely abstracted. Betsy thought he seemed as if he were listening for something. She left him to himself and went to prepare tea for him, carefully remembering her young mistress’s requests; when she brought it in to him he ate and drank, indeed, but very sparingly, and as soon as it had fallen dark, he left the house.

He went up the Minster Hill and across the churchyard to Peter Carlton’s. As he drew near he heard the old man making his solemn music on the organ, and saw the lamp dimly shining through the small-paned window. Tibbie let him go up stairs alone, and he had been a minute or two in the room before the organist was aware of it. But a sudden movement caused him to look round, and when he saw who his visitor was he got up trembling and came to him with both hands stretched out, crying—

“We have lost her, Robert; we have lost her!” in a heart-broken tone.

They sat down and talked of her—her grace, goodness, beauty—her every charm, her peculiar lovingness which had made her the centre of life to both of them; which withdrawn left everything so blank and joyless.

"They would not let me come to her; they said it was better not, and I should have been too late," Peter said, mournfully. "There was her little letter of farewell, and two days after there was yours. My Lady Leigh had sent to ask if I had news that very morning, and when the messenger got home another servant met him at the door and told him that his old mistress had dropped and died without a word; so the grief of hearing that our Lily was gone was spared her. She was a woman whom many will miss, and I believe she loved Lily as if she were a child of her own."

The old man seemed, presently, less depressed than Robert had anticipated: he could talk of other things; of the handsome annuity Lady Leigh had left him, and of the journey into Italy which he designed to take.

"Now *she* is gone, nothing binds me here any longer. I have no kinsfolk but you, and you will spare me. I feel as if I were going *home* in going to Italy, and I think I shall stay and spend my days there. It is a complete end and break-up of my past life to have no more of Lilian—if I were to stop here, I should mope and die too. I have only waited thus long for your coming home."

Perhaps it is merciful that old age feels its bereavements less acutely than the strength of youth. Poor Peter, in the late fulfilment of a long-cherished vision, found some interest yet in his declining life sufficient to contest the possession of his thoughts with his great loss.

It was not so with Robert. He went back to his solitary home, feeling that death had taken from him his one little ewe-lamb and made him poor indeed: no one had loved her, and no one could miss her like him.

### III.

But the burden of the day must be again taken upon his shoulders; man does not mourn as one without hope. In a little while he was again active in his business, frequent in the street, late in the office: life and the world tread their monotonous round much the same whether we are sad or glad; it seems strange to us that they should do so, strange and unfeeling, but the course of nature is inevitable and we submit.

Little incidents took place in Robert's home which slowly

changed its aspect. Betsy, who was a modest, good-looking young woman, married a workman in the manufactory, and removed to a cottage of her own, and Dorothea Sancton gratefully took the same post of housekeeper to her friend Robert which Mrs. Deborah Eliotson had formerly held to his uncle. The transference was very quietly made, and Dorothea was as suitable to her office as if each had been made for the other. Robert Hawthorne liked her kind sisterly companionship, and very soon they were as much used to each other as if they had lived together for years.

But he was very different from what he had been; a deep-feeling heart does not soon rally from a sorrow like his. In some lives, there comes a point where one event seems to build up a partition wall between the past and the present; from whence the eye can look straight through the future to the end of the course. It appears then, that there are no more great convulsions to dread, nothing that can again stir the heart to its foundations. Other bereavements, losses, poverty, or riches may intervene, but it is not such as these that change the face of the earth, like the inner revolution of which I speak—this point came to Robert Hawthorne when Lillian died.

He came home to Walton Minster utterly broken and weighed down by his grief; he was scarcely to be recognized in his haggard misery: nothing soothed him, nothing distracted his mind from it. He was quite a young man when it happened, upright in figure, strong in health, but six months after his hair was gray, and he had the look of one who labors under a mortal sickness. He was not communicative on the subject, and even when Dorothea, hoping to do him good, tried to approach it, he shrank away, as if her touch were too rude for that still-bleeding wound. People who met him in the street, glanced at him with compassion and foreboding. George Sancton and the rest spared him in the business as much as they could; but he, as if sensible that occupation was the best medicine for his suffering mind, kept up to his duties with mechanical precision and exactitude. He permitted no one to miss him who had need of him, but it seemed for a long time as if the strength, and spirit, and hope, were quite crushed out of his heart.

The first sign of rallying that Dorothea detected, was one stormy Sunday night, the winter after Lillian's death. They were sitting together in the parlor, and he had just opened

a book to read when the whole lane began to echo with shrill hoots, whistling, and shrieks. The noise was too common on that day at that hour, to cause any surprise; for the unseemly riot was of regular recurrence on Sunday nights at eight o'clock in the winter season, when the little chapel in the lane left, and Robert had heard it as a matter of course for years. Half a dozen lads pelted past the window laughing and yelling at the top of their voices, pursued by the angry oaths of another whom they had offended, as foul as the mud in the street. Dorothea shuddered, and looked at Robert; who, as the noise ceased, shut his book and said—

“I wonder if it would be possible to do any good amongst these poor creatures, who are living and dying in such ignorance and misery within a stone’s cast of us.”

“Possible for *you*, do you mean, Robert?” Dorothea asked.

“Yes; if I were to take my Bible and go amongst them, and do what I could?”

“But they have their own minister at the chapel now, have they not?”

“No; the place is to let. Poor old Tommy Baily was to be there to-night; not quite himself, I’m afraid, for I met him as I came from the Minster reeling across to the lane.”

“Tommy is worse than nobody; but still, Robert, I do not see what you could do?”

“I could pay the rent of the chapel, and collect a few of the worst and poorest about me, perhaps; at least, I could try. Such an uproar as we have every Sunday night is a disgrace in a Christian city.”

“Not very *Christian*, Robert; but you would not like to turn Dissenter, would you? for the example’s sake, if for nothing else.”

“There is no question of turning. I should take away no man’s work, and interfere with no man’s office. These people are simply unclaimed waifs and strays, for whom no man appears to consider account will have to be given. I do not profess myself as belonging to any sect, and *you* will not suspect me of the ambition of founding one.”

“But you would certainly be *called* a Methodist, and it would be thought very strange, would it not?”

“It would be more strange, Dorothea, if, seeing a certain work that I could do, I were to leave it undone. I am not daunted by any fear of ridicule, if that is what you mean.”

"We have always been such steady church-goers—twice every Sunday, Robert."

"And so we can be still. The chapel is only open at night when there is no service at the Minster."

"Well, Robert, I am sure you know what is right; and if you think you could do good, it is not for me to speak a word against it, only I fear you will find the people ungrateful—they are such a wild, neglected set."

"If I undertook the task in expectation of reward I should deserve and earn disappointment—but I should not. The effort will do me good in myself first, for trouble is making me selfish. And if it is hard to bear for me, how much worse must it be for these poor souls, who seem to have no hope or expectation beyond this weariful world!" He covered his eyes, and there was no sound in the room for a long while. Dorothea was silent; she knew the master was thinking of his little wife.

#### IV.

The chapel was in a close alley about fifty yards lower down Maiden Lane than Robert Hawthorne's house, in an alley so narrow that a person could touch the walls on either hand in walking down it. The poorest of the poor families in Walton huddled themselves together there as a last resort before being turned into the streets. The property belonged to a tradesman in the town who would neither improve it, sell it, nor pull it down, and half the low fevers and infectious complaints that periodically ravaged the low population of Walton were bred in that one Grace Lane—Ill-Grace would have been a more apt title. There is an old saw which avers, "the nearer the church the farther from God;" and substitute *chapel* for church, and here was a full exemplification of it. The chapel, which was an ugly brick building at the top of the alley, had been until now let to Dissenters of different denominations for various short periods since the proprietors of Grace Lane, in a speculative rather than pious mood, caused it to be erected. But the monotonous discourses of the ministers failed to attract sufficient pews-rents to pay the humblest salary, and the frequent change of sect had brought the cause of religion generally into great contempt amongst the loose characters who thronged that

neighborhood. The common Sunday-evening end to the service was, therefore, a scrimmage of taunts and mockery between the few curious or peaceably disposed chapel-goers and the general populace. The place was now standing unlet; its windows smashed by casual stones, and its door battered as only doors of bankrupt tabernacles ever seem to be. Topsy Tommy Baily, the proprietor's ranter nephew, had recently been preaching in it to keep it aired until some accredited minister could be induced to take it, and during this interregnum the habitual riot had redoubled its vivacity.

Robert Hawthorne, therefore, when he entered into treaty for the building, found the owner willing to let it on easy terms, and the next Sunday evening he presented himself, Bible in hand, amongst the noisy groups, who clustered at the mouth of the alley and at the house doors, waiting for Tommy and his flock, and to their profound astonishment asked them to come into the chapel. A great many, moved by a spirit of curiosity, went, and it was remarked that they afterward dispersed as quietly as the most methodical congregation in the town.

Robert repaired the chapel, and, as all the seats were free, he soon had it filled with the class of people whose interests he sought. He had been teaching there nearly three months before the fact became generally known or believed in the town, and then, as Dorothea had foreseen, he had to suffer not a few sarcastic inuendoes from his acquaintance. Saint, methodist, puritan, were epithets frequently dropped in his hearing, though never had any one the courage so to call him to his face; but he bore the imputation with grave indifference, and though he was considered righteous overmuch, radical and crotchety, he gained in respect amongst his townfolks rather than lost; even Dorothea, who was at first very anxious on the matter, soon gave up asking what people said or thought of the master's doings, and bravely declared that whatever he set his hand to must be right and worthy. Some individuals gave him their most reverent admiration, and the Methodists, who chose to regard him as one of themselves, wanted him on one or two great occasions to preach in their regular chapel; but Robert Hawthorne's mission was to Grace Lane and such as Grace Lane, and he firmly declined all their invitations.

I wish I could give you an adequate picture of the interior of that ugly old chapel on the Sunday nights when Robert

Hawthorne had been teaching there about a year. It was filled to overflowing—out on the steps of the door, below the open windows—wherever they could catch a word; not a select congregation by any means; the gatherings of lanes and courts, of highways and hedges, for there was a tramps' lodging-house in the alley, and he had his auditors even amongst them. They were good listeners, these very disreputable people, and what Robert had to tell them must have worn to some the novelty of a story they had never heard before, while to others it would come as a revival of memories long since obscure—to all as a humanizing influence, and a sound of a better hope than any thing their sordid lives could give.

There is nothing easier than to laugh at the oratorical efforts of unlettered men, but there is nothing harder to laugh away than the affection and enthusiasm of the unlettered hearers of many of them. Robert soon won himself a place in the hearts of his people. He saw them in their own homes, in the midst of their toils, their privations, and their losses, which they had scarce time to weep, and there was scarcely one amongst them who had not a secret gratitude to him for acts of kindness done to them in their need. They could believe what he preached because they saw its effect in his daily practice. When he spoke to them of suffering, they saw that he had suffered; when he spoke to them of love, they saw that he had loved; when he spoke to them of faith and patience, they saw that he had that faith which is salvation, and that patience which the Christian wins when he has learnt to say from the depths of a wounded heart, "God's will be done!"

It shall go hard with a man, speaking of what he feels, preaching what he believes, but he shall make some converts to his mission whatever it be; sincerity and earnestness combined make up a power which never fails of its harvest, and this power Robert Hawthorne possessed. He could not have read you a sentence from the New Testament in the original Greek, but he could draw such lessons from its pages as went home to the hearts of his hearers much more readily than any eloquent doctrinal discourse could have done. His illustrations were homely, his language simple, his arguments clear and forcible, his countenance grave, but his name was a household word to hundreds, and his charity was a proverb amongst the poor and destitute.



After an interval he established a school for the children, and amongst them Dorothea found a duty to do, and did it with all her natural energy and kindness. Of course, Robert had his disappointments, his crosses, his difficulties—what human labor is without? but he never wearied in what he had undertaken, and Sunday after Sunday, year after year, he was to be found in the old white-washed chapel with his intent throng of forlorn listeners around him, doing to his utmost his Master's service. He did it for more than thirty years, and I have been told that when one night a new minister rose in his place and said to the people that they would see Robert Hawthorne there no more, a sob burst from the hushed crowd as from one heart, and there was not a dry eye in the chapel.

And knowing what he had been to them, I know that it was true.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

## RETRIBUTION.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience stands He waiting, with exactness grinds He all."

## I.

FEW men could, I imagine, pass two years of the most thoughtful period of their lives in the enforced solitude of a prison without finding themselves and their views of the world very considerably changed, either for the better or the worse; its action on some characters would be like the influence of darkness upon plants—dwarfing and enfeebling them, and making their hues pallid and sickly; and on others like the cutting down to the root of watery overgrowth, so that new shoots may spring up, straight, strong, and fair, from the pruned wood. The discipline upon Cyrus Hawthorne's temperament was analogous to the latter process. He had lived before too much in the whirl of his own sensations, and had let himself go too easily with the impulse of circumstances ever to have truly felt the solemnity and duty of existence. With a natural instinct of nobleness, an admiration of virtue, a preference for goodness, he had a thousand times erred contemptibly; and in the whole course of his practice there was at least but a very blurred attempt at unity or design.

During the first few months of his imprisonment he chafed miserably; but at length he accepted the inevitable, and set himself to make the best of it. Books were freely allowed him, therefore he studied severely, and, perhaps, accomplished more than he would have done in ten years outside those dismal walls. He had the occasional society of a worthy chaplain, who possessed a natural talent for disputation and high mental cultivation; who was ready in argument,

charitable in temper, and a good Christian in his own daily practice. Cyrus was no match at all for him. His stupid sophistries and half-considered objections fell effaced before / Mr. Vernon's home-thrusts; and often his subject slipped from him entirely because his knowledge was too weak to take a good grip of it. Mr. Vernon never allowed any triumph to appear over poor Cyrus's defeats; his victories were too easy for that. He merely regarded him as a young misguided man, whose blunders rather than whose convictions had lodged him in the slough of infidelity, and whom it was a part of his duty to endeavor to rescue. It may, perhaps, be anticipated that, in conclusion, I shall state how Cyrus was thoroughly converted from his speculative ways of thinking by the chaplain's orthodox and well-based arguments; but as religion is not a matter of reason solely, I am bound to admit that, in this respect, he was not materially changed, though in others he was. For instance, he declined reaping the fruits of his cheap martyrdom, which those in whose cause he had suffered were waiting to offer; and declared, instead, that mature reason had convinced him of the radical errors and impracticability of the principles he had for a brief while espoused. This confession of faith drew down upon him, in lieu of glorification, the abuse and scorn which men should always lay their account for, when, in a fit of petulance or hardship, they act falsely to their better knowledge, and elect themselves to preach doctrines they do not believe. Cyrus got no more than his deserts. Shortsighted, unreasoning, prejudiced as his contemners might be, they were not in this instance unjust. If he chose to masquerade before the multitude in a borrowed garment, he had no right to complain if they applied to him the epithet of turncoat when he appeared in his natural clothing; nor yet, having lent his pen and his smooth tongue to the advocacy of what was to them a great and holy faith, had he cause for indignation if he found himself designated renegade and apostate when he seceded from it.

As the term of his imprisonment drew toward a close, his brother Robert and Sir Philip Nugent both wrote to ask him to point out in what way he would be best satisfied to begin the world anew; but Cyrus, deeply humiliated at heart by what he had undergone, and confident that he was now capable of enduring sacrifices, and fighting his battle of life unaided, made answer that it was his wish hencefor-

ward to depend upon himself. He had a brain not meanly furnished, and he had a pair of helpful hands which would make his way for him he did not doubt. He declined his father's proffered allowance on the plea that he would not be fettered from uttering his own independent views in his own way, and at his own time, by the fear of having it again withdrawn, in case he should offend against Sir Philip's principles. One such injustice, he observed, was sufficient for a lifetime. The young man claimed his freedom of thought in a high, even arrogant tone, and Sir Philip took umbrage at it;—he had meant to be kind, liberal, and unexpecting now, and was vexed at being so misunderstood; he could see and amend a mistake as well as his son.

"It is like his pride to believe that he has only to try and win!" remarked he, angrily; "it will do him no harm to let him prove his feebleness again, though the last lesson might have been enough. But even experience finds some fools very inapt to learn when they wear the spectacles of self-conceit, like poor Cyrus; he has some talent, but far from talent of the first order, though he is as vain as a peacock."

Robert was in nowise offended; he thought that a struggle for independence would be a wholesome and natural discipline to his brother's character, and in the kindly intention of encouraging his resolve, he went to Lancaster to receive him when he came out of the castle. Cyrus was touched, and he was glad; he had written a curt letter begging Robert to take no trouble about him, but the unexpected welcome was very acceptable. He did not know how pleasant it is to see a brotherly face in adversity until Robert met him and took him to his inn, rejoicing much as the father in the parable rejoiced over the return of his prodigal son. It is not many friends whom we should be wise to put to such a proof as the oblivion and shame of a long imprisonment might inflict upon us; but Robert only remembered that his brother had suffered the expiation of his reckless folly, and should now be comforted.

Cyrus was looking thin, and ill, and dispirited, and Robert would fain have taken him home to the quiet nursing of Dorothea Sancton; but Cyrus said that what he wanted now was not longer stagnation, but work and effort; besides, it would not have suited him to meet his father or his father's wife at present, or any one who had known him in his prosperous days; therefore, the sooner he hid himself

in the crowds of London, the happier and freer should he feel. Robert, perceiving that his mind was set, did not gainsay him; he understood his brother's proud, uneasy feelings, and compelling him to accept fifty pounds to start with, he let him go; reminding him that he must not be withheld by any consideration from asking further help if he did not soon find his anticipations answered in other ways. Cyrus acceded for the sake of setting his brother's mind at rest, but he internally resolved that neither Robert nor any one else should henceforward be his almoner.

It was in this confident frame of mind he went up to London, fixed himself in respectable lodgings in one of the quiet streets about Bedford Square, and then presented himself to a few of the most intimate of his former acquaintance—of friends, properly so called, he had none; but so little enthusiastic was their reception that, in a savage moment of disappointment, he renounced them all as hollow worldlings, and sought out poor old Master Scrope, who almost wept for joy at the sight of him. Once or twice in his bitter temper he remembered Lola, but Chelsea was a long way off. "When I have *done* something," said he to himself, "then I will go and see her. She must be a woman now, and will have lost the primitive innocence that made her prefer me poor, and in an old coat. I should not like her to give me a rebuff like the rest, so I had better spare myself the risk of it."

## II.

He was, however, destined to see her, though himself unseen, within a fortnight of his arrival in London. Passing one morning by the doors of a fashionable concert-room, he saw her name standing in large capitals upon the bills hanging against the walls. It was her first appearance, the placard stated, and Cyrus instantly went to secure a good seat, and a ticket; he began to feel quite pleased and eager at the idea of seeing her so soon—dear little, affectionate Lola! By this time it is possible that he found his own society and that of Master Scrope, sometimes hanging rather heavily on hand. London is a dreary place for a young man without friends.

He reached the concert-room betimes, but found it already

overflowing. Lola's fame had gone before her from many a private musical meeting, and Señor Manuel's friends and patrons had gathered in full force to give *éclat* to her *début*. Combined with her were several minor constellations, sure to please, but not sure to outshine; prudence had suggested to the Señor not to bring any stars of the first magnitude into contact with his niece on that critical night, lest they should win away from her the warmest suffrages. But, apart from this judicious arrangement, he was tolerably certain of her success.

Cyrus grew very impatient of the overture, and the two or three other pieces, which preceded the appearance of Lola; but, at last, led by her uncle, she advanced to the front of the orchestra, and was greeted by the audience with a generous applause extorted by her grace and beauty. It encouraged her Cyrus saw, and he smiled in silent pleasure, as if in some way or other her success would be a tribute to himself.

The little brown girl was become beautiful—rarely, ripely, luxuriantly beautiful. Her face, neck, and arms were, at first, one pale clear hue of sunned marble, exquisitely turned and molded; but when she began to sing, a rich soft flush warmed her cheeks, like the vermeil tint in the inner curves of a shell. The thick folds of her naturally waved hair, the straight lines of her brows, the melting lustre of her large eyes, the delicate outline of lips and chin and throat, would have satisfied the most fastidious connoisseur of female loveliness, and the visible tremor and modesty of a young girl in her *début*, before a notoriously critical audience, in most eyes enhanced her charm. When her song ended, there was a moment's pause, and then a great outburst of applause. The audience was satisfied—more than satisfied, it was delighted. Cyrus applauded with all his might, hoping she would perceive and recognise him, for he was near the orchestra; but he very ill appreciated her state of mind, in thinking that possible; for to Lola there was nothing visible but a sea of faces, of which her eyes refused to distinguish any. She sang twice again with even more signal success than at first; the pure quality of her voice, its sweetness, its flexibility, and its strength without effort, were remarkable in a performer so young. From the first night of her appearance she was a favorite.

When Cyrus found from the programme that she would

not sing again, he hastened from the room, and would have spoken to her, and claimed the renewal of their friendship that night; but the ticket-taker told him that she had left with Señor Manuel and her aunt the moment her part was finished. He was disappointed for the moment, but he walked home fluttered and gratified, perhaps as much as Lola herself—in his mind he was patronizing her, extolling her, and making her little heart glad with his praises. When he reached his lodgings, the whole of a charming sonnet was singing in his brain, so he wrote it down at once, and the next morning she had it—for he carried it to the post at once, that it might go by the first delivery, and greet her at her breakfast with its pretty spontaneous compliments. He was sure she would recognise the writing, and in the afternoon he followed up the appearance of his herald by a personal visit.

### III.

Lola shed a shower of sunshiny tears over Cyrus Hawthorne's poetical tribute, and at about the same hour as he was leaving his lodgings in town, she began to expect him, wish for him, dream about him. She had pleaded excuses for his long forgetfulness, and had forgiven him, but she could not help wondering how they should meet. She was too old now for the childish familiarity that he used to court, and, besides, she had learnt some of those lessons which beautiful women are never slow in taking home to their soft innocent bosoms. But would he be much changed? Would those two wretched years of prison-life have deteriorated him, or would he be still handsome, gay, spirited, delightful? She knew prisoners were sometimes allowed to write letters—why had he never written to her? How was it that he had not sought the cottage at Chelsea as soon as he was free, instead of sending her a set of complimentary verses, after seeing her at a distance in a place of public entertainment?

Then she fancied that perhaps even now he would not come. He might be too much occupied, too much beset with friends and admirers ready to do him honor after his sufferings, to afford any of his time to her; but she watched and waited for him nevertheless, and prevised what he would say, and how he would look, twenty times over.

She had dressed herself charmingly, and had decked the little drawing-room with a few October flowers, to fête him, should he come; she wanted him to feel his welcome at the first sight of her, for she had a lurking fear that he *might* be broken and discouraged, embittered and distrustful, but he must not distrust her. She had seen Uncle Manuel depart to his aristocratic pupils, and had set her aunt off on a round of visits to her friends and acquaintance, that if they were to meet, it might be alone; and then she sat, almost counting the minutes, until the wicket-gate swung open, and a quick, well-remembered step rang on the traveled garden walk. Her heart began to palpitate foolishly fast, and Cyrus, who had had some natural doubts of his welcome, entered the room, looking gray and grave, and somewhat different from what he used to do; but a vivid blush and brightening of the eyes, a few breathless words, and then a long-quivering sigh drawn out of the depths of her heart, told him how glad, how unfeignedly glad and happy she was to see him. He was glad too—he was immediately *sure* of her; there was no afterthought of contempt or defiance in her mind; she was the same single-hearted, sincere, faithful little soul whom he used to tease so mercilessly, and trust so entirely, long ago. In an instant he remembered all her childish humiliations and worship of himself; but whatever he remembered, he only liked her the better for.

"You will restore my faith in human nature, Lola," said he, cheerfully, sitting down beside her; "you are the only one of my friends whom I find unaltered. Except that you are taller and lovelier, I see no difference at all."

"I hope you do not, but never mind me, Cyrus, talk to me about yourself;" and Lola beamed upon him joyously.

"That is like old times, but I am afraid now of wearying you with the sameness of the story."

"Why afraid? you could not weary me. Oh! Cyrus, why did you not send me a letter when you were in that dreadful prison? You do not know how we honored you in your misfortunes."

"Honored me, Lola!" said Cyrus, changing countenance.

"Yes, were you not suffering in the cause of the desolate and oppressed? All good men must respect and honor you. Oh! Cyrus, don't count me amongst those who can see no glory save in success!"

Lola spoke and looked in her enthusiasm very like the



little brown girl who used to regard him from the heroic side so determinedly in past years, and that she had not yet deposed him from his pedestal was obvious.

But Cyrus was learning to be sincere, and at all risks he would try and undeceive her.

"Listen, Lola," said he, quietly. "I have a confession to make, and when it is done perhaps you will despise me." He paused for encouragement, and she gave it.

"We all go wrong now and then and repent, but I am sure you could do nothing mean, cowardly, cruel, or false," said she.

Cyrus began to doubt whether it was worth while enlightening her; her good opinion was sufficiently precious to him, but he did say:

"Don't speak of honoring me, Lola, in circumstances where I was despicable; I would willingly forget, if I could, that I ever acted such a part; by nature, education, and prejudice I was unfit for it."

Lola paused thoughtfully for a few moments and then said:

"But it was a great cause, Cyrus; it is a noble endeavor, even though it fail, to try to make the condition of the working poor permanently better."

"What do you know about it, little Lola?" asked Cyrus, with an air of gentle raillery.

"Not much, but I imagined you had it at heart, and I read books and papers to understand it for your sake."

Cyrus discreetly let that theme drop, and as Lola questioned him of his present occupations and plans, he permitted himself to expatiate upon them and to claim her sympathy exactly in the old way. Lola was ready to grant it. Their relation to each other was peculiar, but it fitted both with the ease of habit; if Lola loved the more it was but according to the ancient rule of inequality in friendship as in a warmer affection. One gives and the other takes with a return less fervent and less exacting; but Lola felt her maidenly dignity now, and in her softest sympathy there was a measure of reserve.

"Take me round the garden, before I say good-bye; that garden used to be a pleasant place once upon a time, did not you think so, Lola?" asked Cyrus, with a half-laughing, sentimental retrospection when they had been together a long hour.

Lola colored, and for an instant a faint spark of temper flashed into her eyes, but swift some gust of memory blew it out, and looking down, half ashamed, she yet acknowledged that it had been a pleasant place. Cyrus perceived that she would rather he had forgotten her childish attachment to himself in some respects, and that its privileges would be his henceforward in only a modified degree; he would not be suffered to trifle with her feelings now as he did then; it was neither possible nor justifiable that he should do so.

But forth into the garden they went, rustling amongst the early fallen leaves with their feet, and pausing every now and then by the autumnal borders for some allusion to the past or some suggestion about the future. These were nearly all concerning Cyrus's affairs; of her own, Lola told little more than that she had abandoned her old ambition of being an actress, much to her aunt's satisfaction, and that but for Uncle Manuel she would never have sung in public at all. Cyrus commended her. He said that for a woman whom he loved he should detest any kind of personal display.

He would not stay to see her aunt then, but promised a speedy renewal of his visit, and so took leave and went back to his dreary lodgings infinitely cheered.

#### IV.

That was a hard winter; a very hard winter, with long frosts and east winds parching up the springs of life in the frail bodies of thousands who were out of work. But thus far Cyrus Hawthorne was safe and comfortable in his bedroom on the third floor, where the fire blazed every day and he had enough to eat.

That lasted how long? He was not learned in the science of economy, or Robert's fifty pounds *might* have been eked out to carry him through the winter; but he was confident of earning supplies, and never quite realized a possibly moneyless condition until, just before Christmas day, he was obliged to change his last five-pound note to pay his landlady. He counted his shillings after that, and retrenched a meal a day; he was in earnest that he would maintain himself, it began to appear. Fate had decreed that he should

learn, by a dismal experience, pity for the poor, whose daily labor will not always win them daily bread. He had theorized on the subject cleverly enough, but what is cleverness and what is theory in comparison with feeling and hard practice? In a very little while from this he could have drawn a picture of the sufferings of the unfortunate destitute, vivid enough to move the indurated feelings even of a Millburn audience.

Under the spur of necessity Cyrus worked with diligence; he had before him the humiliation of possible defeat in this renewed campaign of life which he had chosen to encounter without allies, and he strained every nerve to avert it. He had in hand a dramatic poem the plot of which had been conceived at Lancaster; he now made haste to finish it, with a view of converting it into bread; but, alas! when finished, it was rejected. Dramatic poems would not sell. He hawked it from bookseller's shop to bookseller's shop during three entire days, and never induced one person so much as to look at it. He would not avail himself of the credit or discredit of any former productions to advance the present one; he wished to cut himself entirely adrift from that reputation which was not wholesome in all nostrils. He therefore proffered his manuscript under a feigned name, and only encountered the curtest of rejections.

He had a tragedy on the subject of Essex and Queen Elizabeth, in which there was a great amount of fine sentiment and sonorous writing; but the managers told him the legitimate drama was gone out of fashion and they could do nothing with his play, which was, besides, better adapted for the closet than the stage.

He had certain essays, moral and didactic, which he had written in his cynical moods when he fancied himself philosophical; but apparently moral essays were gone out of fashion too, or the public had given a diploma to certain persons to supply that article, and refused to accept any thing from other sources, as an infringement of the lucrative monopoly.

By the time he had experienced these failures, Cyrus had increased his knowledge of the world on many points where people in general prefer total ignorance; but his courage, roused by the occasion, kept him up. He used to carry his disappointments and his complaints to Lola, who did her best to cheer him, though I am afraid he grumbled some-

times rather wearifully. She tried to advise him, and many a long, long hour did she listen to his manuscripts read aloud by himself, to prove their weak or strong points on her judgment. Her approval was more frequent than her disapprobation. At a suggestion from her he rapidly wrote a tale, which, though it did not find acceptance amongst the magazines, was welcomed by a publisher who promised him five-and-twenty pounds for it, if a certain number of copies were sold within a certain date. Cyrus was a little cheered, and Lola rejoiced at this first faint glimmer of success. The young man had been very scrupulous in the midst of all his confidences, not to say a word by which she could divine the extent of his necessities; and when she saw his bulk decreasing and his visage looking wan and disconsolate, she never surmised that he was suffering the most painful yet prosaic of needs, but laid it all to the account of mental anxiety and hard work.

On the strength of his expectation from the publisher, his landlady allowed him credit for his rent and his breakfasts, and his laundress let her bill run. For the rest, he used to go out in the middle of the day and make believe to dine. The young fellow was bitterly ashamed of his poverty, but while he was starved within he contrived to keep an appearance of perfect respectability in his dress; and though his clothes hung upon him loosely, and his features were over-spread with an unhealthy pallor, he still had all the air and bearing of a gentleman. Out of the experience of his enforced privations, he indited an article against the wanton waste of those persons who support nature on four meals a day; two, he said, were sufficient; but if he had had the courage to confess all, he would have had to reduce that to *one*; to one, consisting of a penny roll of bread and a cup of coffee, for this was exactly what he discovered it to be possible to subsist upon for a considerable interval—always in anticipation of the five-and-twenty pounds that were coming due.

On the day when he expected to receive it he went abroad earlier than usual; revived and in better spirits than he had been able to feel for some weeks back. The publisher knew, of course, what he was come for, but he entered into conversation with him on indifferent matters, and when the subject was broached as a "by the bye," he replied how sorry he was that the little tale had not had a success commensur-

ate with his expectations, and that the stipulated number of copies had *not* been sold.

Cyrus was too much *cut* to ask any questions; he had a vague recollection afterward of having laughed as he heard the announcement, and of saying something about "better luck next time;" but when he came to a clear sense of the weight of the disappointment, he was walking stupidly home again, with a dismal feeling of hopelessness and despair nipping his heart as the horrible dry March wind nipped the body.

A single line to his brother would have been effectual in changing all this! Robert would gladly have supported him until he could have supported himself, but Cyrus had made a vow to keep his own counsel on his difficulties, and he did it. Had Robert been within reach of a personal application perhaps his high resolve might have given way, but after all his protestations and repulses of kindness, he could not humiliate himself to write a begging letter. He was become chary now of even seeing Master Scrope, lest he should urge him to take a step against which his pride revolted, and his actual necessities remained a secret between himself and his landlady. She knew all his privations and saw through all his pretences, but she never failed in her respect toward him. When she admitted him on his return from the publisher's, she guessed correctly what had happened, though he tried to say, in his natural voice, "A fine dry morning, Mrs. Mawson; it does one good to take a walk in the frost" and thought that, as likely as not, when he got shut up in his room he would cry.

She was a pretty-faced young woman with a heart rich in human kindness, but she had a husband of the ordinary sort and two little children, so that she could not help saying to herself, as her unfortunate lodger went up stairs, "If poor Mr. Hawthorne can't make up his rent now, I'm afraid he'll have to go."

The fire had gone out in Cyrus's room during his absence, and mechanically his hand moved to the bell to order it to be relighted, but he drew back without ringing; and on the morrow, when the sluttish servant came, as usual, to kindle it, he told her to let it be; for the sun shone in at the window, of a morning, so strongly that he would rather be without. Mrs. Mawson shook her head over this fresh economy, and refrained from making any immediate allu-

sion to the owing rent, but late that evening he gave her something on account, and received permission to stay in his room. He shrank from the necessity of having to change his abode in his present circumstances, for that would have seemed to him a great step downward, and one, perhaps, never to be retraced. He knew how fast men sink lower and lower, when they have once been forced to abandon the externals of respectability, and he clung to them as to a forlorn hope. He therefore went on living outwardly much as before, only every now and then stealing out at nightfall, with books or a bundle of clothes under his arm, to a pawnbroker's shop in the Tottenham Court Road. Poor gentlemen like him can get no credit, and whether it was a hole in his boots that wanted repairing, or a rent in his coat that wanted darning, he must pay ready money.

In his exaggerated pride he would always leave a morsel of his penny roll, of a morning, to show that he had enough and to spare; but Mrs. Mawson had seen him turn sick at the appetizing smell of her husband's dinner, cooking in the kitchen, and understood sorrowfully his miserable pangs, which it was a sort of consolation to him to believe were invisible to all the world. She knew that he lay abed late of a morning because of the cold, and that he fretted in secret not a little; but, grieved as she might be for him, she could not help him beyond insisting, when he proposed to breakfast out, that he should still continue to have that meal in the house.

"Your breakfasts are not much, sir, and I know you'll pay me when you can," said she, kindly. Perhaps she suspected that if she did not see him get that little of food, he would go without it as long as nature could be still under the privation.

Are these details petty and wearisome? Nevertheless, such details are true.

## V.

Cyrus could not successfully dissimulate this great disappointment with Lola, but he still contrived to keep her ignorant of his actual condition; and he did this the more readily because the facts were such as nothing within her own knowledge was likely to lead her to suspect. We often know that our friends are poor, sometimes we admit that

they are obliged to pinch themselves of this and of that, but we do not realize them as existing from day to day on diet considerably lower than prison fare. Yet Cyrus was doing this; but while he kept his highly respectable lodgings and appeared in the garb of a gentleman, such a possibility was not likely to present itself to the minds of his friends at Chelsea. Lola's heart used to ache for him, and a little also for herself too, by and by; even now and then she could have wished she had never known him, that he had loved her not at all, or that he had loved her better. He thought much more of himself than of her at all times, and though there was, perhaps, no one living whom he would have missed so much had he lost her, he was not her lover. Lola's aunt, who was a woman of plain and practical mind, did not half approve the frequency and length of his visits, though she held her peace; she was not a believer in the possibility of simple friendship between two young people of different sexes, and more than suspected that Lola was proving the truth of her opinion in many an hour of tears. Cyrus liked Lola for a hundred reasons, but his heart did not beat for her as it had done for Phyllis or even for Félicie. Sometimes he wished she were his sister, or he would have rejoiced to convert her into a male friend; he had never possessed one who could half so readily sympathize with the higher part of his character; but he did not feel in her that inexplicable charm which leads men into pleasant captivity, and causes them to imagine that heaven lurks in the sunshine of one particular pair of bright eyes.

But it must be acknowledged, at the same time, that his circumstances were unfavorable to the growth of any tender passion. When necessity is our daily companion, the heart loses its expanding powers and dwines into selfishness. Poor Cyrus had been very far from anticipating this long drain upon his passive courage, and it was singular, considering some traits of his disposition, that he had not ere now relieved himself from it; but his pride, a false shame, and a sense of cruel mortification, were at work within him, and having drifted gradually into this dreadful sort of half living, half dying, he went on with it, vaguely wondering where it would end. Sometimes he got a few pounds or a few shillings for a story or a song, but he could not help thinking, that from some cause or other, he did not write so well as formerly; or perhaps, it was that he had not the

same means of attracting the attention of publishers, for he obtained but very scant courtesy from them, and if they undertook to print a volume of his, the terms they made with him were very close and hard. He thought sometimes—unjustly of course—that his necessities were the handle by which they screwed him down to the lowest farthing; but misfortunes had jaundiced his mind, and made him suspect all with whom he had to do. But it was a fact nevertheless, that for half-a-dozen tales he wrote which were widely circulated and read, he received a smaller sum than Hester Taffetas got for one of her little mezzotinto stories.

Once while in real distress he encountered the eldest of the three young Nugents of the Leasowes—that one who had contemptuously designated him “a sort of cousin,”—now a gay young man about town. They met in the Park, and though Cyrus would have passed his ancient antagonist without recognition, the other would not permit it.

“Is that you, Cyrus? My father’s in town; you must come and see him—the old place, Eaton Square,” said he, shaking Cyrus’s reluctant hand.

Cyrus put on his grand manner, and muttered something about his numerous occupations. Young Nugent glanced acutely at his lean sallow face and haggard eyes, and replied, “Yes,” he saw he was working himself to death.

They parted with but very few more words, but Cyrus had scarcely taken twenty steps when his cousin pursued him, and, laying a hasty hand upon his arm, said, while a fine ingenuous blush dyed his round honest face:

“Cyrus, there’s no bad blood between you and me, I hope; and I say, old fellow, if I can do *any thing* for you I will; my father’s in Parliament, and perhaps he could get you some little post that would spare your brains. Don’t be proud—I know all is not quite square between you and Sir Philip, but it *might* be if you would.”

Cyrus looked more annoyed than gratified by these well-meant suggestions, and, saying curtly that he was provided for, and needed no help, he marched sullenly away. But he did admit to himself that the stupid young Nugent had a good heart.

A few days after this encounter he had a visit from his former tutor, the Rev. Samuel Miles, now a large, florid, substantial, married rector and rural dean; and it must be admitted that his stout dignity was betrayed into a gust of



pettish astonishment when Mrs. Mawson, after leading him up three flights of steep stairs, ushered him into a bedroom, where Cyrus, without his coat, was scribbling by the open window—scribbling a tale which would very likely be “declined with thanks” by half a dozen booksellers, and finally consigned with a score of others to an old desk under his bed. The Rev. Samuel seated himself with ponderous gravity and, staring at his former pupil with round, wonder-struck eyes, demanded, “What, in the name of all that’s respectable, do you mean by living in a garret?”

Cyrus colored and laughed as he turned his chair round to face his visitor, and said, with an air of satisfaction, “I mean that I am poor, and choose to be independent.”

“Ay, ay, that is all very well, but there is a medium, there is a medium—is that woman down stairs kind to you?” asked the Rev. Samuel, glancing round the dingy walls and furniture.

“Yes, sir, she uses me like a mother; she is a capital little soul.”

“Have you been ill? I declare you have got the look I had for a month or two when I gave up my first country curacy and came to town proposing to be a popular preacher! I found nothing to do, and gave writing lessons at sixpence an hour. You would never have believed now, would you, that I had worn threadbare coats and been on short commons?”

Cyrus did not quite like the turn the conversation had taken, but he said that since he had been in London he had seen and known of things that had led him to believe any degree of misery possible.

“Yes, there are painful scenes going on close beside us that we never suspect often; but I’ll tell you what, sir, I performed a feat in those days that I’d defy you to do—I turned a pair of trousers!”

“Necessity is the mother of invention,” replied Cyrus, stooping to pick up a pin from the floor and rising with a crimson face. Had he performed any such feat of tailoring, I wonder.

“There is nothing in honest poverty to be ashamed of—nothing; but, sir, I don’t like the shifts it condemns a gentleman to. Poverty is a heavy trial to human nature, and no one should voluntarily embrace its temptations who has a righteous claim on a sufficient maintenance.” The Rev.

Samuel had ulterior views in making these moral remarks, but Cyrus chose to acquiesce in them as mere general propositions that had not been brought home to him by personal experience.

"I'm sorry to find you are not on good terms with your father, and he is sorry also. Young Lady Nugent and the dowager stand your friends always—there is nothing to prevent a perfect reconciliation if you desire it," said the rector, by and bye.

"Sir, I do not desire it," replied Cyrus, angrily; "I desire nothing but to be left in my independence; I have made that sufficiently understood before on two occasions, and I do not intend to depart from it now."

"Well, well, my boy, there is no need to fly at *me*—I don't want to maintain you in ease and idleness."

Cyrus modified his tone, and thanked his old tutor for any kind mission he had undertaken, but said firmly that he would not again put it into his father's power either to menace or to punish him.

"If you were doing successfully, I would not urge it upon you," replied the rector, "but, my dear fellow, I see that you are not." At this Cyrus grew wroth again, and exclaimed against his poverty and his struggles being made the ground of insult and intrusion, upon which the Rev. Samuel rose up, crying out;

"I'll intrude no longer,—show me down stairs, sir."

Cyrus felt rather ashamed of himself, and asked more humbly where his visitor was staying, that he might call.

"I am staying nowhere, sir—open the door; I'll follow you," was the answer, and there was nothing for Cyrus to do but obey.

When he came back to his room, the first thing he saw was a sealed envelope which the Rev. Samuel had cast down upon the table as he quitted the apartment, and, taking it up, he saw that it was directed to himself in the fine tremulous handwriting of old Lady Nugent. He broke the seal and found within a bank-note for fifty pounds, and a letter in which he was addressed as her "dear grandson;" it was so kindly and sorrowfully expressed that he was touched by it miserably, but he put the money from him vowing that he would not live upon alms: she called it a "little present," and he knew that both from her and Lady Leigh he had many a time before accepted a similar one without feeling

himself at all ill-used. But now, because he needed it he would not have it, and he enclosed it back to her with a brief selection of fine sentiments, touching the duty he owed to himself in maintaining his personal independence intact; which I have no doubt hurt the tender-hearted lady exceedingly. And that attempt to relieve him was final; Lady Nugent died early that year, and in her he lost a true friend.

## VL

He now wrote to Robert but seldom, professing himself much occupied, and giving a cheerful account of his doings always. He steadily declined going down to Walton Minster, and never expressed any desire to see his brother in town, so that for upward of eighteen months he dragged on the sort of existence I have endeavored to indicate, quite unsuspected by his brother, before it came to a crisis. He had of late months intermitted his visits to Lola; he had not seen her, indeed, since six weeks before Christmas, and it was now well on in spring; for, at length his spirit was broken, and he was become like some poor wounded beast, which would fain trail itself out of sight and die; even her gentle way of dressing his wounds vexed and irritated them.

One lovely May afternoon, when he knocked for admittance at the door of his lodgings, after his customary stroll at dinner-time, Mrs. Mawson opened it but a few inches and said, with the tears in her eyes—

“My master has forbid me to let you in again, sir. He says there’s fourteen weeks’ rent owing, and he won’t let it go any longer unless you can pay. I’ll keep your papers and things from the wash until you send for them, sir.”

Cyrus could *not* pay, and he turned off the step without a word of remonstrance. Every thing saleable he possessed had gone to the pawnshop long since, and here he was, at last, homeless in London streets, with three halfpence in his pocket and the worn clothes he stood in:—nothing else in the whole wide world between him and starvation, or the cruel humiliation of exposing his extremity to those whose kindness he had flung away so often, and entreating their assistance. But that he said he would never do—*never*, though he died like a dog upon the stones!

He passed the rest of that day in one of the parks, and the night in walking about the streets; in the morning he spent his three halfpence on a cup of coffee and a bit of bread at a stall, which was all he ate that day; another night of the streets followed by a day of craving emptiness, a third night under the sky and a third day of bitter hunger. The morning after that, when the sun rose, he was wandering about the fields near Chelsea, and he thought that in the course of the day he would go out and look at Lola's home—perhaps at her faithful little self, and then—and then—Ah! who shall blame the wild, mad designs men form when they have fought their battle with all their might and have been worsted bitterly?

"In the course of the day," Cyrus said to himself, but before seven o'clock he was in the pretty lane, peering through the gate at the garden, all bright and flowery in its fresh spring dress. There were a thousand delicious scents from the dewy lilacs, the sweetbriar, the gilly-flowers, stocks and narcissus, with which the borders were filled. The housemaid had set the window wide in the parlor, and was singing at her work of sweeping and dusting. The place looked the perfection of home and comfort to the poor, hungry soiled wayfarer outside; but after he had gazed at it wistfully for two or three minutes, the servant came to the door to shake her mats, and he moved away. He was soon back again, however, and, at length, his hovering about the house attracted the woman's attention; she watched him go and return, but his air did not excite her suspicion, or she would very quickly have ordered him off, for Sarah was a very dragon in the guardianship of her mistress's property. On the contrary, she stood regarding him furtively for a few minutes, and then she stepped lightly up stairs to Lola's room, and announced, to her extreme surprise—

"Miss Lola, there's been a young man hanging about the garden ever since I got up, and I do believe it is Mr. Hawthorne, and if it is he looks so strange and ill."

"Oh! Sarah, I think you must be mistaken, Mr. Hawthorne never walks out of town so early!" Lola replied; but nevertheless, she got up from her table, where for the last hour she had been diligently copying some music of her uncle Manuel's, and away she went to one of the front windows to look out. She knew Cyrus at a moment, altered and disfigured as he was, and without a word, while the blood

rushed violently back upon her heart, she ran down stairs and into the garden.

He began to walk away as soon as he saw her approaching in her fresh morning beauty of face and dress, but she called after him pleadingly.

"Oh! Cyrus, Cyrus, will you not speak to me?" and he turned back. "Come in," said she, stretching out her hand; "come in, Uncle Manuel is away, and my aunt is not up; you will see only me, and we will have our breakfast together."

"I was taking an early walk, and I thought I would come this way," Cyrus answered, with an effort at his usual manner, though his lips moved with the clammy slowness of exhaustion.

"It is a long time since you have been to see us," said Lola, averting her eyes from his ghastly, unshorn face; she understood that he did not wish her to see his miseries, and she became instantly blind to them, but her heart swelled at the thought of what he must have gone through, before his visage took that impress of wan despair.

"I had not forgotten you—indeed there is no one I have thought of more; but, somehow, latterly I have not been much in the way of seeing my friends."

They entered the little breakfast parlor together, and Cyrus dropped wearily into the first chair he came to, but Lola hastily pushed forward her uncle Manuel's, and begged him to take that, as so much easier, if he were tired. After he had done so, he remarked that opposite the first seat he had taken, there was a long, old-fashioned mirror, and it flashed across his memory what a deplorable object he must present to her sight. A wan blush rose to his face, and he passed one of his lean, bloodless hands over it, to hide the involuntary spasm of shame, till Sarah, entering with the fragrant coffee and new rolls, diverted his mind from every thing else. He could not conceal the animal voracity with which he eyed and ate the food, but Lola chatted quietly and inobsequiously, and suggested to Sarah that Mr. Hawthorne's early walk must have sharpened his appetite into a relish for some more substantial food than she had set before them. Sarah therefore brought in meat and eggs, and remarked as she set them down, that if Mr. Hawthorne were not used to breakfast so early of a morning, he could join her mistress at that meal an hour later.

Poor Cyrus said to himself that the woman must have found him out, and that she wished to warn him thus of the danger of eating much in his hungered condition. Lola kept her eyes so long turned away, and he was so silent, that she did not at first perceive the tears begin weakly to roll down his hollow cheeks, but when she did see them she sprang up impetuous, and ran to him, crying:

"Oh! Cyrus, don't mind me! think that I am only little Lola, to whom you promised to tell all your troubles; be sure that though you have no other friend, she will love you always, if you will only let her."

He covered his face with his thin hands for ever so long, and she continued standing by him, waiting until he could speak to her, and uttering kind encouraging words every now and then in a sweet tremulous voice.

"How can you have patience with such a maudlin fool as I am become?" said he, desperately. "Oh, Lola, I am fallen so low, I am so abject and miserable, that I wish I were dead."

"There is *one* who would grieve if you were. Dear Cyrus, take heart,—have courage; we will all help you. You are distressed now, and nervous for want of rest. Stay here, where no one will disturb you, while I seek my aunt; she will be vexed if I do not tell her you are come."

"Stop, Lola! I could not bear to see her to-day; I hardly know what mad impulse led me this way; I meant to keep my miseries to myself."

"Oh! Cyrus, be intreated. We are only women in the house, and would take care of you—you do not mind any of us."

"Yes, Lola, I do; let me try to keep some shreds of self-respect. You have seen, and will pity me; I can endure pity from you, but not from others. Let me go now, and, if you *can*, forget that you ever saw me in such wretchedness."

"If you would only stay a day or two to recover your strength."

"You mistake, I have not been ill. My work, and the life I have led lately, have told on me—that is all."

"And that is far too much. At least, tell me where you lodge, for I am going to sing at a concert next week, and I should like to send you a ticket to come and hear me."

Cyrus gave her his address as still at Mrs. Mawson's and thanked her, and then hurried to get away, while the courage that food had put into his heart still served him.

## VII.

He recalled her appearance after he was gone, and wandering through the fields again, with a curious distinctness. Her pretty, round, flexible figure in its fresh muslin dress, her unconscious grace of mien and gesture, and her good expressive face; especially he recalled the sunny womanly sweetness of her smooth low forehead, with the large eyes lying shadowed beneath, deep and clear as waterpools, haunting him with a mute reproach, as if she would ask why he did not wholly trust his little friend: for already his pride pricked him that he had let her see his misery.

By and bye a quick spring rain began to fall, and he hastened back toward the turmoil of the town, but without any object in particular; the tormenting suggestion of ridding himself of his painful existence had vanished since he had seen Lola. Homeless, penniless, friendless, whither could he go, unless to Master Scrope? And he had begun to distrust Master Scrope, for the old man had never seen him latterly without urging upon him that he ought to communicate with his brother. He went to him that evening, however, and in the course of it some of his distresses came out—not *all*, and not the *worst*; Cyrus always had some reserves.

"There are some luckless poor fellows, who, with all their talent, seem to have been made *not* to get on in the world," the master said woefully; "*I* belong to that order, and *I* begin to be afraid *you* belong to it also. If Robert knew how badly you are off, he would take it unkindly that you do not let him help you, for he is goodness itself."

But Cyrus would not write to his brother. He could not bear to acknowledge that the talents of which his kinsfolk had thought so much, would not keep him in daily bread. He had been so proud and confident of his capabilities, that it was more than he could bring himself to do in avowing the humiliating result.

Master Scrope had his say about Sir Philip Nugent also. "He brought you up to lead the life of an idle fine gentleman, and having virtually made you helpless, he had no right,

under any provocation, to deprive you of the means of subsistence independently of any toil. He ought to have set you beyond the reach of differences that might occur by giving you means out of his own power to recall as soon as you were of age. Quarrels and difficulties often arise between fathers and their heirs; and between you two there was even greater than ordinary probability of them."

"It is no use talking about that now, but I never did and never could forgive my miserable false position," said Cyrus, drearily; "every torture I ever endured, and every sin I ever committed, seem to me to have had their source in that. I could not reconcile myself to it, or acknowledge it irremediable as Robert did, and ever since, so to speak, I have been knocking my head and my heart against it, with the same results to it and them as if I had been driving myself physically against a stone wall."

"It would have been better for you if you could have taken it in the plain common-sense way, and have set yourself to do the best instead of the worst in it."

"It is easy to say that, less easy to do. I believe it has been to Robert a grievance far greater than he would ever admit; and the sting, the misery, it has been to me no one can guess! All my distrusts of my father sprang naturally from it, and all our aggravations and quarrels since. He has no ideas of abstract justice; he expected from me the implicit obedience, love, and reverence of a son, and at the same time the gratitude and submissiveness of a pensioner who had no rightful claim upon him, and the moment I failed in these latter acquirements he practically denied that I *had* any claim upon him."

"But I think he has offered to repair that mistake since."

"It is a mistake incapable of being repaired. It showed, in fact, how he could have me at his beck and call like a slave, and determined me in breaking such a yoke without ado. I don't deny that he loved me, after his fashion, or that I loved him; he has all personal attractive qualities, and for a lawful son he would have been a father almost to adore—so indulgent, sympathetic, and affectionate; but he is not one to hold the power of doing wrong without using it. There never lived a man who was a more thoroughly successful self-deceiver; instead of ever reflecting that I might demand more consideration than an heir, being less independent of him, he seems to have thought that he might



use me capriciously without my having any just cause of complaint. Instead of his irreparable wrong to me being a check on his injustice, it has been the very moving cause of it."

"Ay, ay. He was treacherous and cruel to your poor mother, and no dependence could be placed on a man who had used her as he did; I would have no trust in a man who lets honor go when some strong passion is against it. If the facts of that episode in his early life were known, his pride would be very sorely bruised; why, he had made himself amenable to the law, if your grandfather had chosen to prosecute him. It is curious to think that many an uxorious poor fellow has tasted penal discipline for just the same offence against law and morals."

Cyrus seemed scarcely to like this suggestion. "That was not a revenge that would have suited my poor mother, who loved him to the last," said he. "Then, as you say, the truth was little known—the Chinelyn people knew it, but amongst Sir Philip's own people, I believe to this day only Lady Nugent and Lady Leigh knew it."

"Women are not often like Mary Hawthorne: her first fancy was her last; then all her love fell to you and Robert. Ay, Cyrus, she has talked to me sometimes, and she did so set her heart on your doing great things!"

"Don't speak of it any more: it makes me too wretched. I could not have fared worse if I had stayed at Chinelyn, sowing and reaping in pastoral simplicity—or stupidity, rather."

"One can never rightly see what is for the best. I wish one could live one's life backward, starting with the experience. I think we should live it better," Master Scrope groaned.

"Nay, I think we should scarcely have courage to live it at all," replied Cyrus, forcing a laugh.

As the night drew in Cyrus shared the old schoolmaster's tea and then departed. He had not told even him how he had been ejected from his lodgings, and when Master Scrope said good night, and shut him out in a pelting rain, he little imagined that he was cast upon the inhospitable streets for the night.

Shivering, drenched, forlorn as a masterless dog, the young man trailed his aimless steps to and fro the streets until he had heard twelve chime from a dozen or more church steeples. The pouring wet had cleared the pavements, but

coming to the top of one of the streets running from the Strand down to the river, he saw a little knot of people gathered on the bank. They were moving to and fro, and several policemen with their lanterns stood about; at another time he would have passed carelessly on, but some singular attraction now drew him to the spot, though he had no morbid taste for the tragedies that excite the vulgar. Just as he reached the place, a drowned woman was lifted out of the water and laid upon the ground; her hair and clothing befouled with the river mud, her limbs and features miserably distorted. Cyrus pressed forward with the rest to look at her, and through all that soil and weed of misery he recognized Laury, his poor little abandoned mistress. He shrank back and let them take her up and carry her away, but do what he would he could not rid himself of the glassy stare of those dead eyes—pretty eyes that he had seen love pictures in once; a pretty, frail, vain soul, whose greatest sin had been believing in him too credulously! How much of deep guilt since, of temptation, of suffering, of hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, had brought her to this pass where the dark flowing river was a refuge, only the Merciful knows. Cover her face, pity her and pass on; Christian charity flings no stones, but only prays: “O Thou who didst pardon Magdalen repentant, be more merciful to this sinner than her fellow sinners were!”

## VIII.

Cyrus had left behind at the cottage at Chelsea one little heart which was all compassion and tenderness for him. Lola walked about the garden when he was gone, crying at the thought of his sufferings, until the pelting rain drove her indoors. She then told her aunt what she had seen and what she suspected, and they consulted together as to how they could benefit him; arranging finally that if he did not come within a week or so, they would invite him to visit them, to recover his health in the pure country air. But Lola's recollections and presentiments were too much for her patience: she could not get out of her memory the ghastly pallor of his features, or the eager expression of his eyes, which betrayed long and greivous privations; and the next morning she announced to her aunt that suspense was

so intolerable, she meant to go into the town and call at Mrs. Mawson's to inquire after him.

"But, my dear, consider how strange it would look for you to be going to a young man's lodging," suggested her aunt.

"If he were well and successful, I should not dream of going near him; but when he is ill and in misery, it is another thing. You must not speak against it, for my mind is set on going."

"It has been a drenching wet night, and the streets will be horribly muddy; but if you are determined, I shall accompany you, Lola; for I hope I know what propriety is," said her aunt.

"And kindness too," added Lola, affectionately kissing her.

It was about the middle of the day when the two ladies knocked at Mrs. Mawson's door and made their inquiries after Mr. Cyrus Hawthorne.

"Oh! ladies, are you his friends? Then I am glad you are come!" exclaimed the landlady, who was looking dreadfully fussed and troubled. "There he lies up stairs raving and bemoaning, and I hardly think he'll live. But the old gentleman that used to come and see him is with him now, and I've got free a bit to see after the house; but I've been at the bedside the whole night through, and I declare it pities one to see him."

Lola turned deadly white, and her aunt said, "Dear—dear! she never thought things were come to such a pass with him as that. Had she better see him?"

"He would not know you if you did, ma'am; for he has been out of his mind ever since he came home last night between twelve and one o'clock; and the doctor Master Scrope brought, said he must be kept quiet. You see, ma'am, my husband began to think he never would pay us, and there was fourteen weeks due; so he said I must make him give up his room, and though it went sore against the grain, I did. He stopped away a few days; but last night, in that pouring rain, he came to the door, and says, 'Mrs. Mawson, you'll let me in?' and it was such weather a Christian couldn't have shut out a dog. Besides, I thought if he should go and do anything rash, I never should forgive myself. So I says, 'Come in, sir;' and he went up to his old room, holding by the bannisters. He seemed as weak as

water; and when I followed him, he had sat down in his wet clothes, and was shivering and shaking so, he couldn't keep a limb of him still. So I told him he'd better undress and get into bed, and I'd bring him up some tea; but when I went back, there he was in the chair, crouched of a heap by the grate, where there wasn't a bit of fire: but I kindled it; and old Jane, who was here late charing, got him into bed, for there was no more help in him than a baby; and I kept her to bear me company watching him, for I didn't know what might happen; and this morning my husband fetched Master Scrope, and he's undertaken to write to his brother, for I hear he has a brother well-to-do."

"Yes; he has friends who would have helped him gladly."

"Then it is a pity but what they had known how he has been starving himself. Many's the time I've said to him, 'Mr. Hawthorne, you'll ruin your constitution living as you do.' For weeks, it is my belief he never had a thing between his lips but the poor bit of breakfast he got here, which would not have fed a child; and though he pretended to go out and dine at two o'clock, often and often he dined none, poor fellow."

"Oh! aunt, how could he go on suffering so, and never tell us!" cried Lola, pitifully.

"When young men fall so low as he'd done, their pride makes 'em shy of telling their friends," said Mrs. Mawson. "Besides, they're always hoping that something lucky will turn up to set them right, though it rarely does. I've a gentleman in my drawing-room who hasn't paid me a penny since Christmas, but whose own people are quite quality, as I can tell by the letters he gets and sends away. But he is worse off, to my thinking, than many a poor fellow who can earn sixpence by holding a gentleman's horse, or by running on a message. There's other folks pined and hungry besides them that stand in rags at the street corners, and offer you three bundles of matches for a penny. All the respectable lodging-house keepers could tell you that; and, for my part, I almost pity genteel poor folks most."

"What can we do for him? How can we help him, aunt?" asked Lola.

"We can only give Mrs. Mawson money to supply his needs, until his brother arrives. I wish we had him in our quiet little house to nurse and take care of. What a pity I

did not see him that morning he came; I should have seen what was coming on, and could have kept him."

"Can he not be moved?" suggested Lola, eagerly.

Mrs. Mawson shook her head.

"Oh! no, miss. If he is to live, he'll live here; and if he is to die, moving him would only shake the little breath he has sooner out of his poor body. He was a fine, handsome, spirited young gentleman once, I daresay; but I think it would take his mother, if she is living, to know him now."

"I should like to see him; I have had some experience of sickness, but you stay where you are, Lola," said her kind aunt, and as Mrs. Mawson could find nothing reasonable to object to that, she led the way upstairs.

Poor Cyrus was lying in a bed hung with dark green stuff curtains, which half filled the room, tossing and moaning in fever. His glazed, unconscious eyes, his blackened lips, and burning skin, attested the fury of the disease that was consuming him. Master Scrope was sitting by the bedside with a basin of vinegar and water, continually renewing the wet cloths on Cyrus's forehead, and responding soothingly to his delirious complaints. The old man looked haggard and anxious, and after slightly lifting his weary eyes to see who entered, he went on with his nursing office.

"Is this poor Mr. Hawthorne? I should never have recognised him—Lola might well be shocked!" said Aunt Manuel, in a low compassionate voice. "Mrs. Mawson, we must have the best advice for him at once."

"We have got it," interposed Master Scrope; "Mr. Wel-land is as good as any, and as he has not much to do he can come whenever he is needed. I would trust him for skill and care as soon as any of the great carriage doctors."

"I wish his brother were here!"

"He cannot arrive before to-morrow night, and unless he mends I am sorely afraid it will be all over then. Oh! Cyrus, my poor lad, I wish I could die for thee!" and poor old Master Scrope's frame shook with the violence of his emotion.

Lola was waiting at the foot of the stairs when her aunt came down, crying—

"We can do him no good, dear child," said she; "he is quite delirious, and there are kind hands enough about him already."

"Ah! miss, I would not fear for him so much; youth can fight through a deal," said Mrs. Mawson.

Lola's trembling lips formed something very like a request to be allowed to see him, but her aunt shook her head decisively, and said—

"Certainly not, Lola. Besides the possible danger and impropriety of it, my dear, I am always of opinion that where women can be of no use they are best away. Master Scrope is the most judicious nurse he can have at present."

Lola understood that there was no appeal, and turned away grievously, while her aunt gave Mrs. Mawson some money for her patient's wants, and assured her that his brother was not a person to let her suffer loss on his account. Mrs. Mawson was glad to hear it, probably as news to avert her husband's vexation against her for cumbering the house with a sick lodger; and as she made no ardent protestations, but promised simply to do her best for him, and send a line by the evening's post, to tell his friends of his condition later in the day, they left the house convinced that he was, at least, in hands where he would not suffer by neglect.

Lola's heart was very downcast and fearful for him, till night brought a note with intelligence that the fever seemed to have a little decreased—at any rate, that he was not worse—when she ventured to hope.

"If he were to die, aunt, I should feel as if there were a want in the world nothing could ever make up," said she, mournfully.

"And yet, my dear, what is he to you? For four months you have never seen him until yesterday," replied her aunt.

"I can't tell, only I feel as I say."

"I think, my dear, you had best go to bed and forget him in a good sleep. You must not be romantic and fanciful."

Aunt Manuel was full of practical kindness and charity, and she was never known to say a harsh word to any living thing, but she thought it a grievous pity when any girl gave her heart away unasked. She did not possess the sympathies that draw out young dreams and thoughts in confidence, so poor little Lola carried hers to her pillow and wept over them in secret.

## IX.

The following night, close upon twelve o'clock, Robert Hawthorne arrived in town and presented himself at Mrs. Mawson's door. She raised her candle to scan his face, and asked:

"Is it Mr. Hawthorne's brother?"

"Yes;" he did not dare ask what news, but she immediately said—

"You'll find him a shade better than when Master Scrope wrote: the fever is lessened, and he is sensible at times, but very weak. I doubt myself whether he will ever again be quite the same man he was."

Robert heaved a great sigh of relief and thankfulness, and asked to be taken up to his brother's room at once.

"Is that Robert?" said a faint voice as the door opened, and then the brother's eyes met.

Poor Cyrus was only the ghost of his former self; his fever-wasted frame scarcely lifted the light bed-clothes with its heavings; his pinched and pallid features had little of their former spiritual beauty; weakness had lined out the brilliant expression of intelligence from his countenance, which was blank and mask-like. Alas! alas! for this lost wreck of so much love and pride!

Robert grasped his brother's hot dry hands in his and stood by him quite silent, while Cyrus looked up at him with a sickly smile, and tried in a tremulous voice to say how glad he was that he was come. Master Scrope, who had had no rest for eight-and-forty hours, looked scarcely less wan than his patient; he greeted Robert in a weary hollow voice, and then was thankful to yield himself to Mrs. Mawson's urgent entreaties that he would allow himself be comforted with a basin of hot tea down stairs, and then sent to bed, lest he, too, should fall ill on her hands. The poor old man was so worn out with sleepless anxiety that he only made a feint of opposing Robert's claim to take that night's watching upon himself, who, notwithstanding his long journey, was so strung up as to feel no sense of fatigue whatever.

When the brothers were left alone together, they had a little low, broken conversation. Cyrus was incapable of more than a few sentences at a time except when the rising of the fever gave him a fictitious strength; but he lay with

his pale eyes turned to Robert's face, fixing them upon him, though there were moments when all recognition seemed to fade out of them. It appeared, indeed, as if the lamp of life were dying down; as if the hours were swiftly passing when any care or any trimming could prolong its burning. At last, with a quivering sigh, they closed. Robert, for an instant, thought that all was over;—over the futile ambition, the tormenting vanity, the longing, the aching, the sinning of a human life; and he fell upon his knees with a cry of, "Oh! my brother, my brother!" But that voice of exceeding love and pity struck even now some remote echo of Cyrus's heart, for he looked at his brother again, and this time with full intelligence.

"Do you remember the red rose that grew in clusters about the window of mother's room at home?" murmured he, smiling feebly: "I thought just now that I saw her standing under it, shading her eyes from the sun, on the look out for us."

Robert could not answer him for joy at first.

"When you are well, we will go home and look at it," said he at length. "It was grown into a mighty bush, and had thrown its branches along the cornice of the house when I was there with my dear little Lilian."

Even while he was speaking Cyrus sank back into his semi-lethargic state, and so continued until the morning, when he awoke conscious. The day had many alternations; Mr. Welland was in twice, but no one could say from hour to hour whether Cyrus would live or die. Toward evening, rallying from his stupor, he said to his brother,

"Oh! Robin, I wish it were all ended—there is no more good in me!"

Robert replied, "In God's own time, Cyr; I pray you may live yet to do your work for your day and generation."

Cyrus was silent for a few minutes and then said:

"I cannot hope it, Robin. Do you know whether my father is in town?"

"I do not know, but let me send and ask at his house. Yes, Cyr, in any event, be reconciled with him," returned Robert, eagerly.

His brother made no opposition; so Robert went downstairs, hastily wrote a note to Sir Philip Nugent, and begged Mrs. Mawson to send a messenger off with it immediately, which she did.



As he was returning upstairs Mrs. Mawson handed him a nosegay of deliciously sweet-scented flowers, which she told him had been left at the door a few minutes before by that beautiful young lady who came with her aunt to enquire after Cyrus. Mrs. Mawson communicated further that she was elegantly dressed, and must have stopped on her way to some entertainment to leave them and ask how he was. Her uncle and aunt were both with her.

"And it was pretty to see how she smiled when I told her that he was himself to-day and had his brother with him," added the landlady.

Robert did not guess who it might be, but he carried the flowers up to Cyrus, who took them with a smile, and buried his face for a minute or two amidst their cool and perfumed freshness. By and bye he said to Robert:

"That girl has more of my mother's heart than any woman I ever knew; she is the faithfullest little soul, and the tenderest, and passionate and fervid as well."

"Of whom do you speak—is it that poor child Laury, as you call her?"

"*Laury! no, Laury's dead!* Oh, Robin, Robin, if you knew all, you could not wish me to live. I bring sorrow on all who love me. Oh! poor, poor Laury!" His voice took a tone of shrill excitement, his eyes glittered, his hollow cheeks burnt with reviving fever. In vain Robert tried to calm him, to persuade him to silence. He would speak of this unhappy woman; he would expatiate on her pretty winning childish ways when he first knew her; he would revert to days of idle pleasure in her company; and to that day when he had told her they must part, in a long, loving letter, which she brought to him soon after and flung back to him saying it was all lies, and whatever became of her, wherever he might hear of her, he was to remember that *he* was to blame for her wickedness and misery. Then he spoke of coming through the heavy rain to the crowd on the water's edge, and recognizing her in the scantily-clad drowned woman who had just been dragged from the river dead.

"And they will thrust her poor body into a pauper's grave—perhaps even without a prayer, though she needs one surely more than they who die quietly in their beds. Oh! Robin, can you, can you prevent it?" he asked, eagerly.

"I'll try; Master Scrope shall go and see. But they will

read the service over her; Christian men would not hold her responsible for her act," replied Robert, laying a soothing hand upon his brother's forehead.

"Then *who* is responsible?" asked Cyrus. That miserable question was unanswered; Robert shook his head sorrowfully: and his brother turned his face away upon the pillow for several minutes.

"Have you no comfort for me, Robin—you who are almost a saint?" said he by and bye.

"Don't say that, Cyr; repent and believe. Oh! Cyr, give the faintest sign that you have put away those infidel errors that you relied on once; tell me you have gone back to the simple faith we both had as children."

"Nay, Robin, my faith is *not* simple."

"Do you believe in God?"

"He has *forced* me to believe in Him."

"And in our merciful Savior—in our Christian faith?"

"It is all that makes life just or sufferable. Yes, Robin; in my misery, *belief* has come back to me, but no hope or comfort with it. But Laury, she had thoughtful little ways, nay, you would hardly think it, but once, when I was jesting at the Bible in my cynical way, she began to cry and dropped on her knees and begged me not. I am glad I did not laugh her out of her grave fancies. But she said, oh, in such a voice, 'But for you I might have been good and a comfort to my mother, Cyrus.'"

Robert again tried to stem this outpouring, which, instead of relieving his brother's mind, seemed only to grow with the utterance; but Cyrus was not to be checked. The fever was burning in his veins as hotly as ever, and when he had talked to the verge of exhaustion, he gradually maundered away into delirious moans and complaints.

Robert spoke to Master Scrope, and gave him money to seek out where Laury had been taken and to bury her, that he might have that comfort for his brother when he again came to himself; and this duty done he waited anxiously the return of the messenger who had carried his letter to Sir Philip Nugent.

## X.

A very different scene from the sick-room at Mrs. Mawson's was that in which Robert Hawthorne's missive found his father. It was a luxuriously furnished, wax-lighted drawing-room, fitted with every appliance of wealth and comfort—spacious, lofty, quiet, airy; the natural abode of the rich and liberal man.

For a wonder, Sir Philip Nugent had dined at home with his wife, and they were now spending a quiet night by their own fireside, with fair little Sylvie on the rug between them playing with a grand, good-tempered dog. Lady Nugent was sitting stately at work on some silken toy or other, and Sir Philip was scanning his evening paper with a double gold eye-glass held up to assist him: for though still a fine, erect, and noble-looking person, he had begun to experience daily little failures, which reminded him unpleasantly that he was not so young as he had been.

While they were thus silently occupied, the stealthy-paced butler entered with a note upon a silver salver, and offering it to his master said the messenger was urgent, and waited his answer. Sir Philip took it up absently, and finished his leading article before opening it, while the servant stood back respectfully near the door. But as his eye glanced rapidly along the few lines it contained, a frightful pallor overspread his face, and, catching at the table to steady himself, he rose, saying:

"Phyllis, I must leave you this evening. Morris, call to the door the first hack-cab you can find—quick."

The servant disappeared.

"Sir Philip, what has happened? what is agitating you?" cried his wife, approaching him hurriedly.

He handed her the note, and quitted the room without speaking.

Lady Nugent's first glance comprehended the contents, and when he was gone she stood up by the fire nervously beating on the marble with her fine white hand. Was Cyrus indeed at the point to die? She must have more or less than woman if she had endured no torture in the hours that followed. The children that had been born to her and had died had humanized her heart; she trembled and was very faint.

"Why are you crying, mamma?" asked little Sylvie, clasping her arms round her mother's waist, and looking up sweetly in her face.

"For no one Sylvie knows, for no one Sylvie loves," replied Lady Nugent, kissing her; and then she rang and sent the child away, unable to endure the innocent searching of her pure eyes.

And until past midnight she sat alone by the fire, weeping and pressing her hand over her heart. Was there still an echo of old pain there, or was it only prayer for her husband's unhappy son? who knows?

Sir Philip flung himself into the cab his servants had called, and with the messenger on the box by the driver, they set off. In less than half an hour he was in Cyrus's confined room, grasping Robert Hawthorne's hand across the prostrate and unconscious form of his favorite son. Mr. Weland also was in the room holding the patient's wrist, and looking serious and anxious. Sir Philip recognized his office, and after trying two or three times ineffectually to form a sentence with his trembling lips, he at last stammered out, "How was this attack brought on? What is his disease?"

The doctor thus appealed to replied, "By necessity, sheer necessity, sir; lack of food, nothing else! For several months past this young man has not had food sufficient to support the life of a child or a delicate female. Look here, sir;" and he uncovered the arms and breast of his patient, which were fleshless almost as those of an anatomical cast.

A shiver ran through Sir Philip's frame, but Robert reverently drew the sheet over his brother, and was grieved the doctor should have inflicted on the old man such useless pain. Yes, the *old* man. Nobody would so have called Sir Philip Nugent even an hour before, but now his countenance, attitude, and gestures were those of a broken old man, very weak, very miserable, and very helpless.

He made a struggling attempt at self-exculpation.

"It is his own obstinacy that has brought him to this pass; we have done our utmost to move him from his determination to live apart and free from us. We sent Mr. Miles to him; Tom Nugent tried to befriend him; my mother forwarded money to him which he returned. Even in his brother he had no more confidence than in others. He had only to say a word, and I would have given him half I pos-

sess rather than he should have come to want. He knew I never intended him to cut himself off from me."

There was no answer. Not in one case in a thousand, perhaps, do we *intend* or foresee the bitter results to others of our vindictive, rash, or careless acts, but we are not to be held entirely guiltless for that. The little seed of evil, sown in a moment of passion, germinates, and buds, and blooms, and bears its fruit, and we must harvest it whether we will or no.

"Is there—is there great danger?" Sir Philip asked, after a pause, laying one of his long white hands on his son's forehead.

"There is always great danger in these cases," replied the doctor, in that honest yet kindly way which practice develops into the thorough trustworthiness of the family physician; "and it would be absurd to deny it in his. If he had not possessed a fine organization, a most remarkably fine organization, he would have sunk sooner than this, and even should he recover, his constitution has been so undermined, that all his days he will experience the echo of the suffering he has gone through in many an irradicable weakness and torture."

Mr. Welland had some of the impetuosity of a young warm-hearted man. He had heard Master Scrope's version of his patient's history, and was, perhaps, not averse to punishing Sir Philip a little through his remorse. He had his desire, if such it were, for Sir Philip sat down on the bedside, asking helplessly,

"What good am I of here? What can I do for him?"

"I had hoped he would have known you," said Robert, kindly.

Sir Philip bent over his sick son, and called him by name endearingly. There was no answer. Poor Cyrus's wits were astray in some fever dream-land, whence, for the present, no voice could recall them.

"The disease will have its own time, and its various alterations," observed Mr. Welland, somewhat touched by Sir Philip's expression of misery; "but as he has held out against it so long, I am inclined to think he will master it if saved from agitation. The mind has reacted violently upon the body, and there is now great pressure on the brain. I should almost advise your not meeting, sir, at present, even were he capable of recognizing you."

"You think it safer not?" said Sir Philip.

"Yes, I do."

"Robert, what do you advise?"

"The doctor's counsel is best. Cyrus was sensible when my messenger was despatched, or I should not have sent him."

"Then I will go home, I—I do not feel well."

He rose feebly, and Robert came round from the other side of the bed, to give him the support of his arm down stairs. Just as they were quitting the room, Sir Philip's eye caught sight of a small desk, in which he remembered that his favorite son used to keep his manuscripts. The key was in the lock, and stopping short, he said, eagerly, "Let me have some of his papers to read; let me have something belonging to him." Probably the request rose from a recollection of how often, when Cyrus was younger, he had laughingly refused to read any thing he had written until it was printed; he fancied it would please him even now if he were to do it. Robert did not see why a request so simple should be refused, and the desk was brought down and put into the cab for him to take away.

When he reached home, Sir Philip did not seek his wife in the drawing-room, where she still waited, but went into the gloomy library, and had lights brought to him there. Confused and trembling, he sat down in a great chair with the desk upon the table before him. Lady Nugent had heard him return, and after listening and waiting for some time, she at length crept slowly down stairs, and knocked at the door. There was no answer, so she opened it gently and went in.

Sir Philip was crouched down in his chair, with a wild glassy stare in his eyes, and a letter clutched in his hand. Phyllis looked at him affrighted, as he made a vain attempt to speak, and, bending near, she saw what he had discovered. Upon the desk lay some sheets of manuscript verse, a colorless mass of dead flowers, tied round with a tress of yellow hair, and several pieces of written paper. The letter Sir Philip held in his hand was that which Cyrus had called, in speaking to Robert of Phyllis's faithlessness, "a poor little lying letter;" evidently he had read it.

For a few moments she stood trembling in every limb, and faint as death; seeing him in possession of these relics, she thought Cyrus was dead. Sir Philip was incapable of any articulate remark, but she understood from the work-

ing of his face, that he wished to relieve her from this dread, and as her hand dropped upon the table near him, he laid one of his own upon it, and she thought he said, "Poor Phyllis!" as if he pitied her. Pride and fear gave her a certain resolution, and while her husband looked on unresistingly, she gathered letters, papers, dead flowers, all together, crushed them into the desk, and locked it.

"Let me help you upstairs," said she, humbly, when this was done—she did not wish any of the servants to see him in his present condition, but when he tried to rise he could not. She was obliged to ring for Morris.

The servant came in, and the moment he approached his master, he said, hurriedly, "Your ladyship, Sir Philip has had a stroke."

It was true; the sudden shock of seeing his dear son in such deplorable misery, and the discovery of his wife's letter together, had overpowered him. From this night, though he lived, he was never quite himself again; he was dependent henceforward on the affectionate attendance of Phyllis, or the care of servants, for every office about his person, and became a mumbling, crippled, prematurely broken old man.

## XI.

Robert Hawthorne anticipated a second visit from Sir Philip the next day, but about the hour he should have come, a letter was brought to him from Lady Nugent, explaining the reason of his absence. The desk was sent back with it, and Cyrus never knew that it had been out of his possession, with its treacherous secrets, for an hour.

When he woke up in the morning, the first words he said were, "Robin, was my father here last night? I fancied once I saw him and heard him speak."

"Yes, he was here. But Mr. Welland advises you to be very quiet, and not to meet again till you are stronger."

Robert evaded any allusion to the intelligence he had just received, lest it should agitate his brother, but Cyrus took what he said with the indifference which frequently accompanies complete physical prostration. His pallid eyes went wandering round the room, until they rested upon the flowers which Robert had put into a glass of water and set upon the

chimney-piece, when they lightened a little: "Lola's flowers," said he, softly.

Robert brought them nearer to him, and while he was looking at them he said, that the mournful idea might cease to work in his mind, "Master Scrope discovered the place to which Laury was carried, and he procured a promise that she should be taken for interment to some cemetery out of town—he arranged all with the proper persons. The inquest was held yesterday, and the verdict was, of course, 'temporary insanity.'"

He spoke very quietly and kindly, and then, moving away, left his brother for some time unobserved. Cyrus turned his face to the wall, and was silent for hours, but whenever Robert glanced toward him, he always saw the same hopeless gloom in his eyes.

About noon came Mr. Welland, and expressed satisfaction in certain signs of improvement, which he immediately recognized in his patient.

"Get over a couple more days, and he will do, then we will begin to talk of removing him," said he, cheerfully, at which Mrs. Mawson, who had brought the doctor up, retreated whimpering.

It was not easy to see whether Cyrus was cheered, or the reverse, by Mr. Welland's announcement. When he and Robert were again alone, he said, drearily:

"The drama is to have another act, then; I thought the drop-scene would have fallen here."

"Thank God that it has not," replied Robert, with affectionate fervor, and then, to divert his brother's mind from the contemplation of mournful subjects, he began to suggest to what place they should go first, to give him the chance of recruiting. Cyrus suggested "home;" he always thought of Chinelyn as *home*; and Master Scrope by and bye arriving, it was decided that that place should be their destination as soon as he was in traveling condition.

Before Cyrus was in a fit state to leave his room, Sir Philip Nugent and all his establishment had departed to Hadley Royal, so that any chance of their meeting again was, for the present, put an end to. The early days of his convalescence were enlivened by occasional brief visits from Lola and her aunt; and his first removal was to the cottage at Chelsea, where Robert and he spent a week. The gentle nursing and pleasant company had a wonderful effect in dis-



sipating the gloom and oppression which continued to hover over Cyrus's mind, but he was hardly grateful enough for it; he did not know how well Lola suited him, perhaps he never would know until he missed her affection. He used to call her his dear little friend and counsellor, and, even then, there was so much of the old heaven left in him that he watched for the little pettish, impatient signs by which her childish love would once betray itself, when he treated her thus coldly. But she had won self-command, now, and gave him back smile for smile; and no one but himself could have detected the little lip quivering, which such smiles strove to hide. He was very exacting of her company, and took a cruel delight in seeing to what extent he could carry his mastery. She submitted with cheerful humility; she even laughed at him, and told Robert that was always his selfish way, and she had ceased to mind it; but sometimes when she was alone she cried bitterly—bitterly. Perhaps you think that a young woman who loves more than she is loved, deserves to suffer. I will not gainsay it, but only plead for Lola that her love for Cyrus had grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength, until it was far too vital a part of her being to be uprooted by the crisp fingers of discretion, or pruned back into chill friendliness by the steady knife of propriety: so I commit her to the merciful judgment of those who have felt in their own breasts that nature is stronger than all the rules of art and conventionality; at the same time, reminding feminine pharisees who are conscious of being themselves pure of all weakness, that, though it may be a grievous error in a woman to show too much tenderness of heart, it is a black sin, and the least pardonable of all, that she should have none to show. A very great deal can be forgiven, and ought to be forgiven, to those who love—and this saying is not new.

When Cyrus took his leave, he kissed Lola's hands, and said, with a spark of his ancient mischief—

“Don't forget me Lola; I am not worth remembering, but I like to be remembered.” He knew quite well that she could not forget him if she would.

She did not trust herself to say much, but stood at the door in the sunny June morning, watching the preparations for departure with a rather pale face and a fast-beating heart. He stayed beside her while the luggage was being arranged, and Robert was getting into the cab, and once,

looking long into her eyes, he said, "I shall not find a pleasanter little friend than Lola anywhere. Give me some flowers—I always like your flowers."

She gathered a few—roses, myrtle, jessamine—and gave them into his hand, as he took his place beside Robert. They neither of them spoke; the driver mounted to his seat, the door was shut, and the cab moved; just then Cyrus showed his head at the window and cried out "Lola!" but the horse sprang forward under a smart lash, and whatever he wished to say to her, it was not of sufficient importance for him to stop the cab to say it then.

"You are scarcely kind to Lola," said Robert, who had not been altogether pleased with what he had observed in his brother's conduct toward her. "I think you sometimes make her very unhappy."

"I believe I do, and yet I cannot find in my heart to wish that she loved me less," was the reply, and Cyrus put her flowers to his lips caressingly. If she could have heard that selfish speech and seen that little gesture, I think it might have soothed the burning pain which a night of tears could not quench. He had left Lola very unhappy indeed, and her aunt mentally registered a vow that he should never more of her will be made welcome at Chelsea.

"Lola is too good and beautiful to waste her youth for a man who does not love her, and who is not worth her if he did; I shall talk to Manuel about it, and we will find some one to marry her; there is more than one now if I am not mistaken, who needs only a shade of encouragement to adore her."

So said in her heart the practical aunt, but she kept her designs to herself, and Lola kept her sorrows to herself.

## XII.

There is always more or less of disappointment in revisiting places where we have been young, happy, and hopeful; the place is not changed, but we who look upon it are. Cyrus and Robert came to Chinelyn in the sunniest season of the year, when every thing was in its beauty; but Cyrus, after a couple of days in the fields and lanes, and by the shore, wearied of it. They went on to Arbon, and Robert made his daily pilgrimage to the two graves in the little churchyard

on the seaward-sloping cliff; quiet graves, with the rose-bushes overgrowing the memorial stones, and the great elms shadowing them pleasantly. Resting there one evening, Cyrus and Robert reopened more of their mutual lives each to the other than they had ever done since they were boys together, living with their mother at the old Manor Farm; and, from that time it became impossible that they could ever again be alienated or separated. Cyrus acknowledged, at last, the utter vanity of struggling or rebelling against the fixed conditions of his life, and, though he might never conform to them as implicitly as Robert had done, he would probably thenceforward let them influence him less.

"We may compare ourselves to people who, from their birth, have been afflicted with a physical deformity; blindness, deafness, or a crippled limb," said he, quietly; "we may *envy* the sane and sound, but we can never be like them, though our hearts were eaten out with mortification; it has taken me nearly thirty years to make up my mind to it, but I see it now, and know that we can never be as other men are."

"But we may in some measure make ourselves independent of our birth-mark," replied Robert; "I have done so; it is long now since I have regarded it with the feelings you do even yet. Lilian lived and loved me in spite of it; I have had days as happy as a prince; but I can say truly that, to my knowledge, it never had any influence either on my actual joys or sorrows. If I had been heir to Hadley Royal, I could not have had a greater treasure of happiness than I had in my darling's affection in the dull old house in Maiden Lane, and I could not have suffered sorrow more acute if she had died and left me rich and idle, instead of still willing to do my share of work while day lasts."

As Robert spoke, the evening sun slanted down a red ray upon Lilian's grave, tinting the white roses with a living blush. Cyrus, glancing at his brother, whose last words had dropped to an inaudible whisper, saw that his eyes were full of tears. He was touched; hitherto he had thought that there was no trouble like his own trouble, but now he saw that Robert had his bitter draught—that he had suffered too—suffered, perhaps, more deeply and more enduringly.

"She was very good, your Lilian," said he.

"She was the most loving heart! I could have let all the rest of the world go, if only I might have kept her," was the

reply. "It is nonsense to speak of loathing life because I lost her, for I hope never to loathe what God gives me to endure; but it was like the withdrawal of the sunshine when she died, and the world cannot ever again be what it was to me with her in it."

Cyrus was silent, and the evening faded gradually into gray twilight. The wind moaned over the sea, and the fog bank rolled over from the west, and blotted out the distant view.

"Shall we go to the inn? this is chill for you, Cyr," Robert proposed; and, with a few blossoms gathered from the graves, they left the place. As they went up the hill, Cyrus began to speak of what he should do when he had rallied from his weakness.

"There is hope in a life yet that has uncertainties and speculations," replied Robert; "but let it wait; do not plan too soon."

"No very sanguine hope."

"There is for you what has been and gone for me—the beginning of life with a strong and faithful love."

Robert alluded to Lola, but he did not mention her name; Cyrus, however, understood him and became thoughtful.

"I don't deserve her; and, besides, she is deceived in me; she fancies me heroic, and would be disenchanted if she knew the truth."

"I am not sure of that, if you love her; but if her own beauty and sweetness have not won upon you, my words will not avail her."

"I do love her, but it is not the same enthusiasm as I had once."

"Perhaps not; but never despair of life or happiness, while there is a young heart devoting its freshness to you. I advise you take it, give in return your best, and grow strong again in its youth."

The brothers had repeated conversations afterward on the same theme, and it soon became evident to Robert that Cyrus liked to talk of Lola better than any other subject, though he still declared himself free from all enthusiasm of love for her; still declared that, in fact, he never had lost his head save for one woman in his life, and felt quite incapable of the same delightful insanity again. Robert used to think sometimes that he wanted to be contradicted, and once he tried the experiment, but Cyrus shook his head

gravely and replied, "It would not be right in me to take her; I should disappoint her miserably. I have not that to give which a fervent young thing like her expects. She would fancy me cold and negligent, and I should feel her exacting; in which circumstances there would not long be harmony between us."

"Then it would be wise and honorable in you to see her no more until she has had time to forget you, or has given her heart elsewhere," replied Robert, with sage coolness.

"That would grieve her terribly—nothing would grieve her more than to think I wished her to forget me; and I don't like to have the remembrance of her reproachful, sad eyes before my conscience. I know Lola better than you do, Robert."

"No doubt of it, Cyr; and therefore to all your other sins do not add the wilful destruction of her happiness."

Cyrus did not take the admonition at all amiss—perhaps, at certain moments, it was exceedingly pleasant and soothing to believe that Lola's happiness *was* in his hands; to believe that he still possessed an influence for others as formerly. He had, through recent events, lost much of his confidence in himself, much of his vanity, ambition, and eagerness of character, but he had not lost his craving desire to be loved and appreciated, and probably he never would. The roughest experiences only modify a disposition; they can no more change it than climate can change the color of the skin from white to black; a warm bronzing of sun and weather is all the transformation nature chooses to undergo, either physically or morally, and with such slight variety Cyrus Hawthorne after his troublous years was much the same at heart as the boy who dreamed dreams of impossible honor and glory by the seashore at Chinelyn, and was so exacting of his mother's affection.

### XIII.

At first coming home Cyrus had manifested some disinclination to renew his acquaintance with the Fords, but Robert was so urgent with him that he conquered his half-ashamed repugnance to appear before these old friends in his fallen reputation, and one morning the two brothers called at the parsonage.

Mrs. Ford, sweet soul, almost wept at the sight of Cyrus, and after her husband had talked to him a little while, she got him away into the garden by himself, and keeping one of his hands clasped in hers, began to ask him if his mind was freed yet from the net of error in which so short a time ago it had been involved. Cyrus was inclined to smile at her suddenness and urgency, but she looked at him with such lovely eyes, and spoke with such real earnestness, that he tried to answer her as she would have him; perhaps, rather surprised that he could speak to a woman on such a subject at all.

"I am so glad, so glad," replied she, with a trembling smile; "so glad to hear you say your struggle goes on—there would be no struggle were not God in your heart still; and He is there, though a rebellious intellect prompts you to disbelief. Cyrus, when I lie awake at night, and think of those I love, and you amongst them, sometimes I feel as if my heart were bursting, but when I remember your mother's life—when I remember how she watched for you and taught you—I have felt sure, *sure*, that God would bring you back, and He is doing so now; her prayers could not be all lost, or lost for ever. When you are weak and tempted, recall her memory, Cyrus—recall her pain and patience; they should have a holy power over you."

Cyrus left her rather saddened. He knew of old that this good woman, who had stood for years, as it were, on the brink of the grave, had but one absorbing thought and hope. Already she appeared to live more in heaven than on earth, for her mind was there much oftener than here. Nothing, perhaps, tends to produce this spirituality in religion like the daily proximity to death; so thoroughly did it pervade her being that no one could be with her many minutes without feeling it. And yet so little formal and obtrusive was it that it never offended any, or, what is commoner, excited a single breath of ridicule or sarcasm. People whose minds were the least easily moved to exalted sentiments always conceived a wonderful reverence for her, and left her presence with something of the subdued feeling they would carry away when they had been treading on holy ground.

Robert had been absent from Walton Minster now for nearly a month's space, and Mr. Reuben Otley had twice written to know when he proposed to return; Cyrus was not disposed to journey into the north, and as he was now

well enough to be left, the brothers agreed to separate for a short time. The Fords were going into Brittany for an autumnal holiday, and it was suggested that Cyrus might accompany them, if he were so inclined, and thought the change would be beneficial. Robert scarcely anticipated that his brother would accept the offer, but he did, and rather thankfully; his mind was too much shaken and weakened to be able to apply itself, and he shrank from unoccupied solitude. There had been news from Hadley Royal that Sir Philip Nugent was no worse, and the family solicitor had been ordered to communicate with Cyrus as to what he meant to do, and to notify that the full allowance his father had made him formerly only waited his acceptance; but there was no hint of personal reconciliation, though Cyrus, in his subdued frame of mind and body, would not have been averse to it. Robert would have been glad that it should take place, but he did not urge it; and perhaps both thought it might be less difficult and formal, if deferred until Cyrus came down to visit Robert at Walton Minster after his return from Brittany, in August.

Cyrus's last act before leaving England, was to write Lola a long, detailed account of his proceedings since he left the cottage; it was a curious letter, contradictory and uncertain as his own behavior, but she liked to receive it, though she would not answer it. He was a little piqued, and wrote again, but again without eliciting any reply. He did not understand this silence, and it fretted him more than he could possibly have anticipated. What did it mean? Was she ill, offended, or what? He tried a third time, and represented himself as dull, unhappy, dispirited, because she forgot him. Was that, he asked pathetically, like the faithful little friend she had always promised to be? Upon which Mistress Lola wrote back:—"Dear Cyrus, you were busy and cheerful, and needed no consolation when you wrote before; so I thought it useless to waste time in answering you, especially now that Uncle Manuel is ill, and wants more attendance than my aunt can give him. When you are in any trouble again, you can claim me, but I know I do not suit you for a friend in sunshiny weather; you have others whom you love much better, and I do not wish to take your thoughts from them, but you were a whole fortnight after you left London before you wrote a line to us—I do not count Robert's letters, *you* were our friend."

"Jealous little soul," said Cyrus, when he had read this; "she loses her humility and tenderness when she takes pen in hand—she would never have said that to my face."

In the course of the day he indited another epistle to her, reproachful, rallying, but more affectionate—almost lover-like, indeed; and after he had done it, he experienced no regrets, but rather an exaltation of spirit. He hoped Lola would answer that, but she did not. She cried over it, and felt indignant; he was ungenerous to play with her feelings, she said, and she would neither write to him nor see him any more.

She gave herself up to nursing Uncle Manuel, who was very cross and impatient in his sickness, and tried to put Cyrus out of all her thoughts—an effort that hourly defeated itself. While she was thus occupied, Mrs. Ford, sweet soul, was busy with her hopes of converting him, and happy in her good work. She found him sometimes very impressive, and sometimes very absent; at the latter times he was thinking of a dusk loving pair of eyes that were far away, and wondering if they were sad or indifferent in his absence, and how they would greet him when they should meet again. This consideration was beginning to take a very vital form and substance in his mind; even, at last, he grew to thinking of Lola almost as much as she thought of him, and yet, with an unintelligible perversity of temper, he kept saying to himself, "I am not in love with her, but I daresay that is because I never could be in love with any woman again."

XIV.

When the Fords' holiday was expired, and the charms of Brittany were exhausted, they returned home to Chinelyn, and Cyrus went up to London, much more eager to discover the interpretation of Lola's pertinacious silence than was at all reconcileable with the avowed state of his sentiments toward her. The evening of his arrival his impatience bore him off to Chelsea through sultry August dust and sunshine, and coming to the familiar gate just about tea-time, he heard Lola making music in the pretty little drawing-room, the window of which was thrown open to admit the air. Stay—was it Lola? He stood and listened—yes, that was Lola's touch on the piano, but who was accompanying her on the



violin? The violin was not Uncle Manuel's instrument. Very fine playing it was—exquisite—masterly—but still it need not have produced quite so much emotion in the listener's mind. Cyrus waited until the piece came to an end, and Uncle Manuel's gruff voice cried "Bravo!" at which there was a trilling little peal of laughter accompanied by a bass chuckle—the chuckle of the violinist, Cyrus was assured. He advanced and knocked at the door, bringing Sarah to it in a bustle; and as she let him in he saw Lola half way down the stairs with her pretty prying face looking over the balusters to see what visitor was coming in such a fume. She laughed and cried out—

"I thought it could be nobody but you!" and then met him and brought him into the drawing-room.

That was the only welcome he was likely to get. Uncle and Aunt Manuel received him with solemn frigidity, and when he scowled round the room in search of the violinist, that individual stared back with imperturbable German visage, and tenderly put his beloved instrument into its case and locked it up; a proceeding which Lola interrupted with cousinly familiarity.

"Nay, Fritz, don't put the violin away; after we have had tea you must let Cyrus hear you play."

Cyrus made no eager response; he felt very little at his ease, for Uncle and Aunt Manuel, in inquiring after his health and his tour in Brittany, took pains to show that their interest was of the coolest kind, and even Lola, after the first impulse of pleasure, became quiet and simply catechetical in her conversation, though she looked rather sorry and unhappy. He was half in a mind to go away before tea, for here there was no chance of reproaching Lola for negligence and forgetfulness of him; her aunt might have told him that he had no claim on her thoughts and had already received far more affection than was his due.

Violinist Fritz sat glowering at him with large pale blue eyes until Sarah came to say tea was ready in the parlor, when he took hasty possession of Lola's arm, and left Aunt Manuel to Cyrus—a disposition that enraged him. Considering that he was not at all in love with Lola, the contempt and animosity he conceived for Fritz were remarkable; his jealousy was easily piqued it appeared, and he was as exacting in friendship as men usually are in a warmer passion. What right had Lola to have eyes, ears, or tongue, for any

one else when *he* was there? Lola evidently did not take his view of the claims of friendship; she spoke quietly to him, but she was lively and pleasant with Fritz, and easier and freer—yes, easier and freer than she had *ever* been with him. She was like all women, he said to himself—light and fickle as the wind.

After tea she did not rest until Fritz consented to play a solo on his famous violin, to which she listened with silent delight. Indeed, it was fine to see the stolid German face light up with enthusiasm, and to see how the musician triumphed, as it were, over his instrument; but Cyrus failed to appreciate his genius, and as the last strain quivered into silence he got up from his seat, and without a syllable of compliment declared that he must go. Lola looked a little startled by his abruptness, and he thought he would punish her for daring to like any one but himself; so when he shook hands with Aunt Manuel, he said, in a careless distinct voice—

“I must say good-night and good-bye; I go into the north to-morrow, and my return is quite uncertain; it is even possible that I may remain there altogether.”

Aunt Manuel did not exactly wish him *bon voyage*, but she *looked* it, and so did Uncle Manuel. Violinist Fritz started at him as a curiosity of temper only to be found amongst the islanders who paid such magnificent sums for their music, and Lola gave him a trembling hand; and looked up in his face with grieved questioning eyes. She made a movement to accompany him to the gate as usual, but he put her back, and said, like an indifferent visitor,

“Pray do not take the trouble to come down-stairs for me,” and to his extreme vexation she quietly said, “Good-bye,” and obeyed. They had never parted so coldly before.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

## FROM DAY TO DAY.

"TOILING, rejoicing, sorrowing,  
Onward through life he goes ;  
Each morning sees some task begun,  
Each evening sees its close ;  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's repose."  
LONGFELLOW.

## I.

MANY things that were honorable in past times, offices that were venerable and of high dignity, have, of recent years, fallen into disrepute. There is something ridiculous in the idea of a mayor, for instance. A mayor suggests a plumpy alderman full-blown ; pompous, florid, and loud-voiced ; a man of foolish decisions, empty speeches, turbulent town-meetings, and prosy ungrammatical addresses on public occasions ; a man of feasting and respectable excesses, a glory to himself and a mockery to his neighbors. Why it should do so I cannot undertake to explain, but I aver that it does ; the populace has no reverence for mayors as it had in old times. It is therefore a rather courageous thing for a story-teller to do, but truth compels me to state that Robert Hawthorne served his adopted town of Walton for three consecutive years in the office of mayor, and served it well, bringing no obloquy upon the dignity in his time, but rather in that locality divesting it of its mirth-provoking reputation. He had it in his power to advance and introduce many beneficial changes in the place, and amongst other things he started the Mechanic's Institute, and endowed it with the beginning of an excellent popular library. The growth and encouragement of this institute was one of his especial cares long before he attained to the civic honors, for he saw in it an effectual means of improving the moral

and intellectual tone of a class that much needed it. These institutes may have been disappointing in their results since, but at the time of which I speak they were the best means of popularizing instruction which anybody could suggest, and Robert Hawthorne met with very little opposition in his efforts. At no period and in no act of his life could self-interested motives be imputed to him, and, though he might sometimes be mistaken and sometimes obstinate and tenacious of his own views, his intentions always deserved and won respect. He established evening classes with competent teachers, and his purse was never closed against any reasonable demand upon it. The members called him, amongst themselves, the patron-saint of the institute. It does not belong to this history to follow Robert Hawthorne with minute particularity into the later years of his life, but merely to indicate those more marked events which throw a gleam of light across their otherwise monotonous course. And in mentioning the institute I am reminded that it was on the occasion of a fête which celebrated the first anniversary of its existence, that he saw his father for the last time. It was during this month of August, while Cyrus was at Walton Minster, that the fête took place, and of its incidents I shall give some few details.

## II.

The committee of the institute had obtained Sir Philip Nugent's permission to use his grounds for the gala, and had issued invitations for a small tea-party—three or four thousand or so—which had been very cordially accepted by crowds of the working population of the county, to whom a visit to Eurevaux Abbey was a treat of which they who walk in silk attire and fare sumptuously every day can form no adequate conception. People were more anxious for a fine day than ever for a fine St. Wilfred's. Would it rain? would it hold up? were momentous questions. Anxious eyes consulted the gray heavens, anxious ears listened to a certain whushing sound amongst the trees which, to the fearful, prognosticated rain, but which the sanguine would not listen to at all. Of course it would hold up. Cyrus Hawthorne declined the entertainment; but Robert took Dorothea Sancton and two of her brother George's young-

sters in the phaeton, and all along the Hadley road as they went were the laden vans, gigs and omnibuses, piled up with tiers of faces, all of them composed and solemn as it becomes working faces to be when they go forth to invest their hard-earned capital in so serious a matter as a day's pleasuring. There was a continuous stream of people on foot too; the smartest parasols, the most dazzling bonnets, the thinnest muslin dresses terminated by stout serviceable boots. Husbands and wives with large families of children who could afford the sixpence apiece for tea and admission into the Abbey grounds, where a concert of two hours length was provided for the gala folks' entertainment; pairs of young lovers, looking spruce and happy; parties of agricultural laborers, decent artisans, detachments of factory hands; people, in short, of every kind and every degree below the exclusive. A few drops fell, a few clouds brooded mischievously, but nothing worse, and the day was so cool that there was not the shadow of an excuse for any body being out of temper. There was not a cross face to be seen all the day, not even of those two boys whom Robert passed, mounted on one donkey and progressing spasmodically at the rate of five yards in ten minutes; they thrashed and grinned, and grinned and thrashed with good-humored perseverance, quite sure that they should "get there enow."

A large field had been hired for the gala tea, and a vast tent, with accommodation for one hundred and fifty people seated at the table together, erected. Mighty preparations in the way of spice-loaf, current-buns, seed-cake, gingerbread, and bread and butter, had been made; but when Robert and his party arrived only the officials were there, working hard for the entertainment of their guests. One shrivelled little holiday artizan, passing by the boilers that were to supply water for tea, bade them "keep up t' steam, for they suld be vara dry;" and the steam was accordingly kept up with great spirit.

Perhaps Eurevaux never before saw such a vast number of perfectly well-ordered, well-dressed, comfortable folk trooping through its glades. Not a twig was broken, not even a wild flower pulled; the grass was sacredly respected, and every foot kept to the gravel walks. Wrong-headed people would now and then stand arguing with the guides stationed here and there to show the way, as to whether they had not a right to make short cuts just as they pleased,

over grass, plantings of flowers, and through ornamental woods, never remembering that the tramp of hundreds across exquisitely kept private-grounds might possibly leave a few tracks that would not improve them or conduce to a second permission for them to make their holiday there. Some of them could hardly be made to listen to reason, and felt themselves deeply aggrieved; but when the Abbey was reached and the music began, temper was restored to even these wrong bosoms.

The musicians had stationed themselves before the Abbey on the open green; the sun had come out then, and thousands were seated on the sloping grass around, listening with quiet enthusiasm to the pleasant strains. The Miserere Chorus from some fine opera, the beat of the bell wailing through the hollow aisles of the Abbey with mournful solemnity, and Handel's grand chorus, "The Heavens are telling," were in that place most impressive and majestic. When the concert was over, the bell-ringers from Walton Minster mounted into the old tower with their hand-bells, and rang a merry peal that was almost enough to stir the bones of the holy monks who had lain in the burial-garth for centuries, out of the dust; and then the greater part of the crowd began to troop back to the gala tent for tea.

Robert Hawthorne, who had been chiefly instrumental in getting up the entertainment, had suggested to Dorothea and Mrs. Sancton and some other of his lady-friends in Walton that if they would consent to preside at the tables and make tea for the people, all would go smoothly; and this suggestion had been so cordially accepted, that at each of the thirty tables there were two house-mothers of the middle class, serving in most instances their own workpeople, and supported by young folks and neat maid-servants as waiters and assistants. Dorothea had bright eyed little Polly Sancton at one elbow and one of the school teachers at the other, and made tea for full three hours in the midst of the most perfect harmony.

There was a little crushing outside the tent to get in with the earliest, but the surging crowd was speedily quieted by George Sancton's ready little speeches, and the women with babies being admitted at a separate entrance was like oil on the waves. In the greatest press there was one pretty little incident observed by Polly Sancton, which shows how the mother's milk never dries on the lips of the hardest and roughest of

men. A wee thing fast asleep was passed from hand to hand over the heads of the crowd unawakened, and a way made through into the tent for its mother to rejoin it; she having got so deeply entangled in the mass that the baby was not safe in her arms. Other incidents were more humorous. A very fat woman made her appearance at Dorothea's table in a melting state, and informed the company generally, as she received her welcome cup of tea, that there "wasn't a mossle on her left," though every one saw she took up the room of two reasonable bodies. It was good to see how they enjoyed their tea! Polly Sancton handed seven cups to one young man, who ate in a ruminative manner until his countenance shone again, and certainly carried away change for *his* sixpence. No doubt there is a good influence in these meetings of class and class on even ground, though I know there are many who would fear to compromise their dignity, or bring their social standing into question, should they venture to share in a holiday like this, where are assembled thousands of working folks; and above all, a liberal sprinkling of those strong-charactered, plain-spoken, West Riding of Yorkshire holiday folk, who are said by those who do not know them to be so barbarous, so care-for-nobody, so "I'm-as-good-as-you" in their everyday garb and manners. But if these doubtful ones had been at Eurevaux that day, they might have divested themselves of all their tremors, for Lady Nugent was seen several times in the course of it driving in her low pony carriage about the grounds with one of her pretty nieces beside her, and Sylvie on pony back following with some of her cousins, and they spoke of the gathering afterward as being as quiet and orderly as a Quaker's meeting. Indeed, the mob were gentle-folks that day; gentle-folks every one; low-voiced, patient, contented, hungry, and thankful. They showed an honest, frank civility, which was quite as genuinely polite as the orthodox bend of the back which obtains in the best society. "Thank ye'm," for a cup of tea from the plainest was the curt expression of a grateful feeling; for, from the gusto with which they imbibed the draught, they must have been "vara dry." Such hard hands, such brown faces but such good faces there were amongst them! There was one little old man who had been elected to the arduous office of filling the urns from the boiler, who cried out continually, "Noo keep oot o' my sunshine!" and the phrase, though as old as the hills, never

failed to excite a grin of applause. Fathers brought in little children, lovers came with their sweethearts, and now and then appeared a more stately group who were critical as to their tea, and evidently expected nectar and ambrosia for sixpence a head, but still felt they ought not to be dissatisfied, and came down from celestial visions to tea and spice-buns with very commendable resignation. After the tea—or rather during the tea—the so-called Clodhopper's band began to play lively dance music, while the young folks who could danced on the sward outside the tent, and those who could not engaged in the various games. Nothing intoxicating had been permitted to enter the grounds, and the only person whose calling demanded his ejection was a man who had come with what the policeman described as “bag o’ tricks,” which were confiscated, but afterward restored.

Dorothea and her young people went away early in the evening, but Robert Hawthorne remained behind to see the fête closed. While walking about the grounds, there came up to him a stranger, a tall, slight man, a little bowed and round in the shoulders, and with a cheerful though sorrowful face. He was one whose expression said that he had not been accustomed to get his bite off the sunny side of life's peaches; he looked as if he knew by a (let us fancy) now dim experience, what a blissful thing it is for those who eat bread in the sweat of their brow to go free of care for a single day, to prank themselves in the sunshine, to hear music and singing-birds in the woods, and to see beautiful sights, which, even to the dullest, suggest something more than labor and sorrow. It was probably out of the heart of this experience that he said to Robert, “I like to see the people happy, that is what I like to see, sir;” and then added, after a pause, “and what a little it takes to make 'em so.”

They were still standing side by side, a great throng being gathered in front of them, when they observed every one becoming silent, and through the midst of the crowd, which parted right and left to let him pass, advanced an old, old man—few persons except those who had witnessed his rapid decline would have recognized in the thin, half-paralysed figure and wild-eyed visage, Sir Philip Nugent. In his serviceable right hand he clutched a stick to guide himself, and Morris supported him carefully on the other side. He was perfectly conscious of the respectful acknowledgments



of the people, and bent his head in return with a shadowy dignity. Robert, who had not seen him since the night of his visit to Mrs. Mawson's when Cyrus lay ill, was struck with surprise and commiseration, and as his father immediately knew him, he advanced and, at a slight indication that it was his wish, took the servant's place. They walked out of the gala-field together to a gate where Sir Philip's chair had been left, and Robert would have assisted him into it, but he said, rather impatiently, "No, no, I can walk farther;" and tightened his grasp on his son's arm as if he were afraid he were about to leave him.

"If you will get into the chair, sir, I will walk up to the house beside it," Robert said, kindly.

"It does me good to walk a little; Morris never lets me walk enough," replied the old man, querulously. "Robert, is Cyrus here? I know he is come to Walton, and I want to see him."

"He is not here to-day, but I will tell him and he will come over," replied Robert.

"Will he? or—or I can come to him; but there must be no delay; I—I want to talk to him."

They were walking very slowly along a turfed pathway, which was a private way to Hadley Royal, and on the farther side of the hedge of which was the road leading to Walton. The lane was all alive now with the holiday folks trooping homeward as cheerfully as they had come, and with even more noise and hurry. Alluding to the fête, Sir Philip said, "You find a pleasure in this sort of thing, Robert—you, perhaps, even think it a duty."

"Yes, sir; and it is kind in you giving us the means of gathering such a multitude together. Eurevaux is the attraction."

"My lady said so. She has been driving about amongst the people, and has been greatly amused. She assures me they have behaved well, and have destroyed nothing. Powys was rather afraid of the Millburn folks."

"They have behaved admirably; they are quite tractable when they are trusted, and they may be thoroughly trusted too."

The servant came up and said respectfully he was sure his master had better get into the pony chair; Sir Philip still appeared unwilling, and kept his haggard eyes on Robert's face, but a few more paces it was evident that he had gone

as far as his feebleness would permit. His restless anxiety to retain his son near him was piteous to see, and Robert at his entreaty still went on with him toward the house.

"I want to speak more to you; I have a great many things to say to you," he urged. "You will come with me to my room; you will not need to see any one else. Morris, we will go round by the orchard to the east door."

And accordingly, avoiding the public entrance, the chair was drawn through the kitchen gardens, and Sir Philip was assisted out of it into that room which Robert had entered once some years before, when the house was being decorated and prepared for the reception of a bride. His glance went straight to the picture over the chimney-piece, his brother's portrait, and Sir Philip, observing it, said eagerly, "It has hung there always. My lady has been a good wife to me, but I did not know, on my soul, Robert, I did not know before I married her what there had been between them!" His paralyzed hand struck up convulsively in the painful energy of his asseveration, and his whole frame shook with emotion.

Robert guided him to his chair, and said a few quieting sentences to the effect of how useless it was to reopen these irreparable grievances.

"But I wish Cyrus to know," was the hasty reply. "Why did he not speak in time? He never trusted me, though I loved him more than any of my children since. I did, Robert; the lad suited me; I was very fond and proud of him, indeed."

Sir Philip paused, as a step was heard approaching, and the moment after Lady Nugent entered. It was growing dusk, and she did not, at first recognize who was with her husband, but when Robert spoke she acknowledged him with stately grace. She was become a matronly, fair woman, gentle, dignified and sweet-countenanced; Robert, in observing her, felt that his father must have spoken truly, in saying she had been a good wife to him.

"You have made this an exciting day, Sir Philip," said she, laying one of her dimpled hands upon his nerveless arm; "I wish you would allow me to bid Mr. Hawthorne leave you now, and return to-morrow."

The old man looked up in her face with a sort of feeble reproach, and replied—

"You drove one son away from me, Phyllis, and made us

enemies; you might leave me the other a little longer—for he is my son as much as Everard was."

Lady Nugent changed color, but she still smiled, and spoke sweetly; turning to Robert, she said, in a half-apologetic tone:

"Sir Philip is scarcely himself at all times, sir. Will you ring for Morris?"

Sir Philip made no remonstrance when the servant came and offered him his help to the chamber adjoining, where the old man now slept, but he bade Robert follow also, and dismissed his wife with a short good night. She went away with a second hint to Robert not to stay long. When the door was shut, Sir Philip began to fumble for his keys, and made Morris unlock a cabinet which stood near the bed. When it was opened, he pressed a spring, and, disclosing a secret drawer, lifted out that portrait of Mary Hawthorne from which the copy for Cyrus had been made. He thrust it into Robert's hands, saying, hurriedly—

"Take it away, it is all I have left belonging to her, and I would not have it fall into their hands when I am gone. Tell Cyrus what I have said to you, and bring him to-morrow. Come both of you; I have much to say to you, but I forget it now—Morris, what is that? Who knocks?"

"There is no one knocking, Sir Philip," replied the servant, respectfully.

"I tell you there is! open the door!" was the querulous answer.

Morris did as he was bid, and convinced his master that he was mistaken, only by looking into the passage and declaring it to be empty.

"It is very strange, some one certainly knocked. You are going, Robert? Well, good night—kiss me, my son, and remember to speak to Cyrus, I want him to know. You will be early to-morrow—very early."

His fingers relaxed their grasp of Robert's hand very reluctantly, and twice he called him back to repeat with greater urgency his message to his favorite son: at last, when he was permitted to leave the room, Morris followed him out and whispered—

"Sir, I see a great change in my master; you will not fail him in the morning?"

Robert glanced back at the watchful figure crouched in the great chair, and suddenly returned to his side.

"Sir," said he, with moved affection in his voice, "if I have erred in anger against you, or withheld love to which you had a claim, forgive me now."

Sir Philip looked up at him feebly, and replied,

"It is my son's forgiveness that *I* want; bring Cyrus here. Tell him I was very fond of him, and that I never knew until I found the letter from her—I may have suspected, but she was made to deceive me: but I always say she has done her duty by me."

He began to wander in his talk after this, and Morris hurried Robert away. His remaining longer then only did harm. When he reached home, he called Cyrus to him alone, and told him every particular of his interview with Sir Philip. Cyrus was profoundly touched by the description he received, and was as eager as his brother desired he should be to go to Hadley and be reconciled to his father. They settled to drive over on the morrow, at the earliest hour they should be likely to see him, but it had been elsewhere decreed that this meeting and reconciliation never should take place.

The next morning, as the brothers were sitting at breakfast with Dorothea Sancton, the great bell at the Minster began to toll in slow booming minute strokes. Robert's color went, and he glanced up in Cyrus's face. They were quite silent, but as their eyes met, tears flashed into them both. Just at that instant George Sancton came to the door. Robert turned and looked at him. "The minute bell?" said he, interrogatively.

"Sir Philip Nugent is dead," replied George, and shut the door and went out.

### III.

Sir Philip Nugent was buried with all the pomp and circumstance of his state and station. *Cortège* of county gentlemen, procession of tenantry, and servants in full mourning, mutes and feathers, velvet and crape—nothing lacked of the insignia of woe. Little Sylvie, crying because her mother cried, watched the funeral winding slowly through the shady avenues of the park, to the family vault in the church, outside the gates, and when it was lost to sight, jumped down, from her post of observation in the nursery window, and

was naughty because grandmamma Lowther had forbidden that she should go out to play.

When the procession reached the church, there was the Rev. Samuel Miles, in full canonicals and respectful sorrow, to perform the last offices for his beneficent patron, and it seemed to those who heard him read out the majestic words with which the ashes of Christian brethren are committed to the dust, that he enunciated them with deeper fervor for this great dead man than was his habit in praying over commoner clay. He was very fine and impressive, and perhaps the occasion required that he should be so.

But who *wept* for the dead? His young widow, who lost the splendor for which her youth and beauty had been sold? I think not; she wept, indeed, but it was scarcely for him. (His little daughter? Papa had been half forgotten in his melancholy sick room already, before they made such a grand show of him, and carried him away to be buried and forgotten altogether. His heirs? Nay, Tom Nugent was but a cousin, and he came into a glorious property. His tenants? Most of them had long leases, and carefully secured. His servants? They were ready to a man to cry, "The King is dead!" "God save the King!" for the same wages as the dead master gave them.

Then did none weep for him? Yes. After the courtesy mob had gathered in the church, there came his two sons, and mingled almost unobserved with the throng. They, who had perhaps as little cause as any, *they* mourned him; nature's voice spake aloud in their hearts, and they felt themselves sons of the dead, spite of all wrong never to be undone. And when the crowd of formal mourners dispersed, they stayed behind, and saw the coffin placed in the vault where so many generations of Nugents lay—no place there for *them*—no rights as children of the race, beloved though they had been beyond all others.

The road was all still, every trace of the funeral pageant had disappeared, when they quitted the church, and arm in arm retraced their steps across the fields to Walton Minster. They spoke little. Never, probably, in any circumstances had the penalties of their birth come so near to them as they came now; Robert, at all events, had never felt them so keenly. The only sons of their father, uncalled to his burial, less welcome there than servants and strangers, departing unnoticed and uncared for, whilst distant kinsmen and curi-

ous acquaintance trooped back to his abandoned house to listen to the solemn reading of the will, and make their stealthy comments on the sober satisfaction of the heir, and the crabbed disappointment of forgotten legacy hunters.

One of the first questions asked by the general public, when a great rich man has departed is, How has he disposed of his property? Sir Philip Nugent's will was county talk, and even newspaper gossip for several weeks. Hadley Royal being entailed on the heirs male, lineal or collateral, Tom Nugent succeeded to it as a matter of course, but he succeeded to nothing else, and therefore *he* grumbled. He had expected a fine sum in ready money, and was disappointed of that. Only the year before, the whole estate had been thinned of its fine timber, and Tom Nugent was too discreet to cut down young wood, or the magnificent ornamental clumps of trees that adorned the park, so that for a year or two he would have either to borrow or economize carefully: he made people laugh by declaring himself poorer than before he inherited Hadley Royal, and contrived to work himself into a belief that his cousin had not used him well. For some time before he died, Sir Philip had lived very much within his magnificent income, and it now became evident that he had done so in the intention of providing for his sons. To Cyrus he bequeathed Ackhill, a beautiful little property in Warwickshire, consisting of a handsome residence, and five farms, which produced a rental of from eleven to twelve hundred a year, coupled with the condition that he should resume the name of Nugent, in addition to his own. A further bequest of ten thousand pounds in money was made to him by a recent codicil added to the will within the month preceding the testator's decease. To Robert also was bequeathed ten thousand pounds, and Redbank, a country house, old-fashioned, but commodious, about a mile and a half out of Walton Minster. The widow had the dower-house on the Minster hill, formerly occupied by old Lady Nugent, and three thousand a year charged upon the rents of Hadley Royal, and the only legitimate child, Sylvie, had the portion which in her mother's settlement had been set aside for younger children, with the further addition of ten thousand pounds, vested in trustees, to be paid when she came of age, or, in case she married before that, upon her marriage day. Old Lady Lowther flung up her turbaned head, and exclaimed, when she heard the terms of the will,

that it was most iniquitous, and that unless dear Phyllis contrived to save something out of her dower-money, Sir Philip Nugent's only child and heiress would be little better than a pauper.

#### IV.

Robert's bequest was not hampered by any conditions, and though, perhaps, he would just as gladly have been without it, he speedily put it to good use. The church of Holy Trinity and the school annexed were his gift to the town of Walton, and supplied a crying need. Dorothea Sancton would have had him remove to the house on Red-bank when it became his; but Robert was, in some respects, a creature of habit, and preferred to remain in Maiden Lane; the haunting remembrance of sweet Lilian hung about the old home too dearly for him to forsake it; and after this failure it became evident that he would never leave it permanently while he lived. Beside, he was near his business, near his chapel, in the midst of his workmen and poor people; all his occupations and interests were there, and he was reasonable enough to see that he would be less in his element, and less happy detached from them. Cyrus reasoned with him on the subject, but Robert stood firm; his roots had struck deep into the homely, middle strata of society, and he was too strong and old to bear transplanting.

There were a few who misunderstood his motives, and charged him with greed and money-craving, that he kept on at the manufactory, but his life might have contradicted that—or, if not, his death would. *He* had no large bequests to make in *his* will; a little annuity to his faithful friend and servant, Dorothea Sancton, was all the future he provided for: if any wished to learn what had become of the hundreds and thousands which from first to last passed through his hands, they must have gone to the sick, the desolate, and the oppressed, for their information. *He* would never die a rich man, except in the good deeds that he had done.

Cyrus complied readily with the last request of his father—pleased and gratified, no doubt, to do it, and became Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent again with singular complacency. He had his regrets—and very acute they were for a time too—that the opportunity of reconciliation had escaped him; but he was satisfied that as much justice had been done him as

the circumstances admitted of, and he conformed himself to his novel position with ease and dignity. He went through a formal interview with the new owner of Hadley Royal and his boys, but there grew out of it no real cordiality; Cyrus never could or did cease to remember that he was a son, and they but cousins, and the old jealousy, though stifled, never died. As Nugent of Ackhill, he had a respectable standing amongst the Warwickshire gentry, and he and they forgot as much as might be any original blot upon his escutcheon, but of things wrong from their beginning, and unalterable of their nature, there can be no real oblivion, and perhaps as long as he lived, strangers, in asking who he was, would be told, "Nugent of Ackhill, an illegitimate son of old Sir Philip Nugent of Hadley Royal."



## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

## A CHRISTMAS ROSE.

"My true love of old,  
She is my life, and my goods, and my gold.

"Then come the wild weather, come sleet or come snow,  
We will stand by each other however it blow.

"Oppression, and sickness, and sorrow, and pain,  
Shall be to our true love as links to the chain.

"So love in our hearts shall grow mighty and strong,  
Through crosses, through sorrows, through manifold wrong.

"How in the turmoil of life can love stand,  
Where there is not one heart, and one mouth, and one hand?"  
*LONGFELLOW'S Translation from Simon Dach.*

## I.

ACKHILL had been a pet whim of Sir Philip Nugent's ever since he bought it; from year to year he had spent a great deal of money in perfecting the house and grounds according to his own good but lavish taste; until, now that it came to his favorite son, Cyrus had nothing to do but to enter on possession of one of the most beautiful and complete places, for its extent, that the country could boast. Not unnaturally, he was proud of his inheritance—a very different thing it would be, living there in luxury, to grinding his brains for bread in a London lodging. The novelty of his position gratified him exceedingly, and, receiving as much civility from the surrounding families as unmarried young men with pleasant properties, handsome persons, and interesting characters usually do receive, he soon found himself quite at home in it. He was restored to the class of associates he had frequented in his youth, and they were the most natural to him; some few, perhaps, to whom wonderful, exaggerated, ro-

mantic histories of his life and conversation had come, were, at first, inclined to eye him askance, but he soon vanquished their distrust, and won back his ancient reputation for being personally delightful, especially amongst women. He had a small but well-appointed establishment, and began his life of bachelor squire with considerable ease, dignity, and success.

Is it possible that it bored him by and bye? It was very different to his youthful aspirations, certainly; but then who does attain to the summit of his aerial castles? He was sometimes as dull and discontented as he had been in his darkest days, and gave way to surprising fits of surliness. He had contrived to make it understood that he did not intend to marry, and this, perhaps, in some measure, tended to discourage the profuse civilities with which he had been, at first, welcomed. At all events, let him accept every invitation he received; let him go out hunting, shooting, fishing; let him read and write as much as he would or could, there still remained always a margin of hours unoccupied and very heavy in hand. He used to feel some of those weary disgusts which he had experienced in his Lancaster prison, and occasionally to long for a return of that struggle for bread in which he had already been so signally worsted. But these were only *thoughts*, wayward fancies, that came and went like shadows over sunshine; in the depths of his heart he was glad that his good genius had taken the battle out of his hands, and made him safe from the want which had indeed come upon him like an armed man. This phase of mind was only a repetition of a very common one amongst men;—never content, always looking back with regret, or forward with speculation; and in Cyrus Hawthorne, from his youth up, it had been a distinctive trait.

His brother Robert came to see him; he also brought Master Scrope from London, and established him for life at free charges in a pretty cottage near the gates, where he was easily attainable to receive those outpourings of the restless spirit in his old pupil's breast; he tried his hand at village improvement; he first fraternized and then quarreled with his rector, but still his soul was not satisfied. He visited and encouraged visits from the pleasantest people of his neighborhood, but he was no more to them than a hundred others were; their ways were not his ways, nor their interests his interests. He began to feel that nobody cared

much about him amongst these new friends; present or absent he was quite indifferent to them; and this conclusion reached, he would gladly have exchanged their solemn dinner-parties for a cup of tea in the Chelsea drawing-room, and all the pretty graces and accomplishments of his new feminine acquaintance for one smile or word of little Lola's.

The vanity of the gentler sex has been an established fact for ages, but the vanity of the ruder is regarded as an open question still; and yet, and yet it has a force and intensity where it does exist, tenfold more tenacious, irksome, and exacting, than women's vanity. Theirs is easily appeased: a commending word, glance, smile, will make their hearts happy for a long while; but when it comes to such vanity as Cyrus Hawthorne Nugent's, the craving is perpetual. Sympathy and appreciation were what he was continually demanding, and being continually disappointed of: there was no one who could give them in such full measure as Lola, because no one had such an invincible faith in him; and this was why his thoughts reverted to her again and again, with an ever-growing desire to have them back, when the quiet, every-day courtesy of friends and neighbors palled upon him. He wrote to her in the old confidential way, claiming her interest in all he did, or said, or thought. He told her how little real satisfaction he found in his present life; how, when he took his pen in hand, his ideas fled; how, when he tried to read, the spirit evaporated from the pages; how, when he went into company, he was always wearied. Perhaps his case was a little exaggerated, but he *believed* he was stating nothing but the truth. Lola said to herself, in reading the first of these epistles, "If he were one of us, I should think he was in love, but men are not to be judged like ourselves;" and the reason of his discontents remained a puzzle to her.

Cyrus never waited for her replies; but, when the spirit moved him to write, he wrote more or less diffusely; and, the exercise over, he always felt relieved by the outpouring. He had despatched three of these letters before he got any answer at all, and when one came it was brief, but very kind. Lola was sorry he was unhappy—what could she say to comfort him? He should seek society that suited him for relaxation, and he should set himself some worthy task to do, and work at it with daily energy. She was sure that he

would never be still unless he had some absorbing object of thought, some aim in life, that was noble.

"That is exactly what I lack," said Cyrus, as he read it; "but even if I possessed this noble aim, who would keep me up to it? Nobody but Lola's dear little self."

In writing to her again he mentioned Fritz; where was that famous violinist now? did he spend many evenings at the cottage in Chelsea? Lola answered these questions ambiguously, and extolled Fritz's playing with more enthusiasm than Cyrus considered that *any fiddling* could merit; he did not write to her for nearly a fortnight after, and even then he was rather sarcastic about the round-eyed German musician—Lola thought rather ill-natured also.

## II.

As the winter drew in, and the evenings of lamplight and solitude lengthened, Cyrus's letters lengthened also, until they became quite voluminous, and must have absorbed a considerable portion of Lola's time to read; but she never found them too long. Aunt Manuel did, however, and too frequent also; and, after turning the matter over in her mind for several hours, she at last determined to do her obvious duty, and to speak about it. They were alone in Lola's room one evening after Fritz had been to tea and departed, and when Uncle Manuel was fast in bed, where illness had now kept him several weeks; so there was no risk of interruption to the lecture, which the brave but practical aunt felt *might* turn out to be a dangerous experiment.

"Lola, you are very unkind to Fritz," she began, with the abruptness which kind people often fall into when undertaking a distasteful task; "you were *very* unkind to-night. I wonder how you *can* treat any one who is so fond of you so ill!"

"What will I do?" asked Lola, surprised by the unexpected attack, but ready for defence.

"I am not prepared with a list of your misdemeanors, but you know what I mean—you do not *half* like him."

Lola laughed, took her aunt by the round white chin, kissed her, and told her not to be a dear old tiresome fidget.

"No, Lola, that is disrespectful, when I want to speak to you for your good," replied Aunt Manuel, extricating her

face from the caress with a very mild attempt at severity ;  
“and Fritz is so *truly* excellent.”

“On the violin he is—he has not his master in the world!”

“Then why don’t you like him?”

“Now, auntie, *don’t* ask silly questions. Did you like Uncle Manuel for his big bass voice?”

“But for his big bass voice, as you call it, I should never have heard of him; yes, I *do* like him for it, it is his distinction.”

“Ah! well, auntie! but I cannot like Fritz for his violin, it is no use trying.”

“You are very unfeeling then; but I understand the reason of it; I am not blind—I *see*.”

“If Fritz could play on fifty violins at once, I should not like him any better, and if you tease about him, I shall hate him!” cried Lola, flashing out into a moment’s passion, and then laughing merrily.

“It is very wrong in you to speak of hating any body, but many things are changed since I was taught my catechism. When I was a girl, it would have been thought highly improper to be receiving three and four immensely long letters in a week from a gentleman, unless he were an engaged lover—yes, Lola, it would *indeed*.”

Aunt Manuel softened her habitually gentle voice at the last words, because Lola had changed color and drooped her eyes shyly as if she were hurt.

“But we have been *friends* so long,” pleaded she, apologetically.

“True, my love; but has not such friendship a great risk for you? He is safe; men never change the affection which has become habit for a warmer passion, but sometimes women do.”

“You need not be afraid for me, auntie. I know all Cyrus wants from me, and he knows that I know it,” replied Lola, with unconscious dreariness of voice and manner. “I am very happy as I am, only don’t tease me about Fritz.”

“I will not; but, my dear, give up the letters.”

“There is nothing in them—you may read one if you like;” and Lola drew Cyrus’s last letter from her bosom, which was where she generally wore those documents.

Aunt Manuel frowned a little, and asked her if she had no pocket, but she put the epistle away, and declined to pry into the writer’s affairs.

"It was not written for my eyes, Lola, and I had rather not read it; besides, my spectacles are down stairs: but I feel that it is only right I should reason with you, and tell you my opinion of this young man." Lola winced, but Aunt Manuel went on—"He is very selfish and vain, whatever his virtues may be, and I do not deny that he has some; he will not let you go, and yet it is quite evident that he does not love you as men love the women they desire to marry."

"Oh! auntie, never mind. If I don't care, you need not!" expostulated Lola, trembling all over.

"My dear, I *must* care, when there is that excellent Fritz longing to open his mind to you; he spoke to me yesterday."

"But I shall never marry Fritz, auntie, and you may tell him so."

"*Never* is a long day, Lola. Your views would change if there were no more of those letters to trouble you, but as long as they go on arriving every other morning, you cannot help buoying yourself up with the idea that he will come to like you more by and bye."

"No; I don't think any thing of the kind; I am quite sure I don't!" Oh, Lola! Lola!

Aunt Manuel shook her head over the earnest denial very solemnly, and hoped it was a conscientious one.

"I wish you would never mention Cyrus to me again," said Lola, impatiently; "it does no good. We understand each other, but no one else ever will understand us. Why cannot we go on being friends as we always have been, unmeddled with?"

"But poor Fritz?" suggested Aunt Manuel, timidly.

"Poor Fritz is nothing to me."

Lola turned away with a petted lip, and, as she kept her face averted, there was reason to suppose that she was crying. Aunt Manuel got up and kissed her affectionately, already repenting her interference; and, for a minute or two, Lola hid her face on her shoulder and sobbed like a scolded child.

"There, there, I did not want to make you unhappy," said her aunt, caressing her; "only don't be so cross with Fritz, and now go to bed and get a good sleep." And with a few forgiving kisses they said good night.

And poor little Lola, with the letter in her hand, sobbed herself to sleep very miserably. I desire to forestall any observation that may be made as to her folly by admitting

at once that her aunt Manuel did not lecture her half severely enough.

### III.

To the sarcastic letter about violinist Fritz, Lola sent no answer, neither did she reply to those that followed it. In fact, she had not much to tell Cyrus—she could not speak of herself, lest she should betray sentiments for which he might condemn her; and of her outward doings there was little to say. Uncle Manuel still continued ill, and she had, by her aunt's request, declined all concert engagements for the winter; that sober respectable woman would have had her pledge herself never again to appear in public, but Lola would not do this.

"If I am not to be happy, I will be famous," said she, in her heart; and to deaden her pain she resumed the study of the operas and plays which she had never quite relinquished, and told Cyrus in one of her short and rare letters that the ancient ambition of being an actress was returning upon her again strongly. In answer to this came an impetuous remonstrance from Cyrus; "modesty of her sex, outrage to feminine delicacy, unfitness," figured largely in his phrases; for a *friend* he took too much upon himself, but it was clear that in his own mind he possessed a sort of proprietorship in all Lola's thoughts, designs, and doings;—if he had been guardian, brother, or affianced lover, he could hardly have expressed it more decisively.

Lola rallied him in her reply to this, and told him, what he ought to have remembered, that she had to be her own bread-winner, and that when her engagement with Uncle Manuel terminated, which it would very soon do, she would have to come to some decision for her own future; she should be sorry to do any thing he disapproved, but she had only *one* talent, and that she must use; besides, they were in different spheres of life now, and he must cease to expect the same unity in their friendship; what either did ought not longer influence the other—"for, indeed, I think, Cyrus, we are going two separate ways, and shall never meet any more as we did once," said she. It was a courageous little letter—not plaintive or melancholy or pathetic, but very quiet and sensible and reasonable. Lola had taken *such* pains to write it, to keep out of it every expression that

might seem reproachful or sad ; but somehow the effort betrayed itself, and touched Cyrus to the quick.

He sat pondering over it one night, and arguing the case closely to himself. He had *tried* to win her affection, he *had* won it, and—and he really liked her better than any woman in the world ; why should he not go farther, and seek her for his wife ? Then he recalled the soft depths of her eyes, where every thought of her heart mirrored itself—thoughts he had read and delighted in and triumphed over often : poor little Lola, he had been very unkind to her ! Then her caressing voice, the sweet mobility of her lips, the pretty passionate impatience of her frown and quivering delicate nostril—she was very lovely, but did *he* love her ? Not as she deserved to be loved assuredly.

He glanced round the room in which he was sitting alone ; very cheerful of itself, but to him dull inexpressibly ; he wanted some companion always there—some one, even if it were only to remark how the December wind howled over the garden, and how loud the rain drove against the windows. Well, Lola would do for that. She was not his fair ideal of old, neither was *he* the hero of old ; but if she would marry him, they might be very well contented together ; already they had a strong affection of habit, already they knew each other's ways and opinions, and would have fewer disappointing discoveries to make than is often the case with married lovers. He sighed over the document that had induced this sober train of thought, and wondered that his life should come to such an unromantic consummation.

Some one has said that men never ardently love what they have never ardently desired ; and indeed, with most of them it seems true—certainly it was with Cyrus Hawthorne. There had been no exciting hindrances to intensify his affection for Lola. All had flowed on smoothly, until he was as used to her sympathy as he was to one of his own members ; and possibly the loss of it might have affected him almost as closely. He had professed to Robert his unworthiness of Lola's youth and freshness, but he did not believe it—not at his heart. Perhaps if he had any lurking distrust, it arose out of a fear that he was about to make a sacrifice of himself, and that when it was offered up he might come to repent it. No defeats and no experiences are great enough to cast out the legion of vanities that possesses some masculine hearts.



## IV.

Two days later Cyrus Hawthorne presented himself at the cottage at Chelsea, and was admitted. The drawing-room was unoccupied when he went in, the fire was low, the piano closed, the music piled up in order as if it had not been disturbed for weeks. The house was very quiet, and the thick snow which lay out of doors deadened the external sounds. Though there was an air of chill and formality about the room, there was no neglect. The vases were dressed with Christmas branches of red-berried holly, and the little basket on Lola's work-table was heaped with her belongings—Cyrus's last letter peeping out from beneath her handkerchief. A book was lying on the couch where she had been sitting; he took it up, and found that it was Schiller's *Marie Stuart*. He was just reading Fritz's name on the title-page, when the door softly opened and Lola came in.

"Uncle Manuel is very ill," said she, and Cyrus saw with a certain pity that her eyes were weary and dull with tears and watching—"very ill, and my poor aunt is in great distress. You must not keep me long, Cyrus. Are you making any stay in London?"

"That depends, Lola. I am sorry for your trouble; I wish I could do something for you;" and Cyrus sat down beside her; her quiet, sorrowful greeting had chilled him—it was not *his* Lola who looked so grave and anxious, so little eager and glad to see him.

"I am afraid you cannot," replied she, twisting her slender hands nervously; "unless you could make him well."

"And you have other friends—you have violinist Fritz—"

"Fritz is gone back to Munich."

"You are unhappy, Lola? Tell me all about it." Cyrus's tone warmed; he took one of the restless little hands, and held it fast.

"Not unhappy, Cyrus; distressed and pained to see Uncle Manuel suffer, and a little tired with sitting up of nights—that is all."

"Then you must let me try to comfort you as you have comforted me many a time—as you will comfort me many a time again. What do you mean by writing that we are going different ways, and cannot any more be the same friends

as formerly? I feel no desire to change, unless it be to make you more than ever my own—my *very* own, Lola.” He bent down to peer into her sweet eyes, which were turned away from him and full of tears.

“That is not the way to comfort me, Cyrus,” said she, with trembling lips; “don’t let us speak of ourselves now.”

“But I came for the purpose. Have you no confidence in me, Lola?”

“What confidence should I have in you, Cyrus?” and the great, soft, reproachful eyes looked straight into his.

Cyrus was startled, and stammered—

“I love you dearly, Lola—no one so dearly. I had begun to hope that we might spend our lives together; I came to offer you the best I had to give.”

Lola was silent.

“No answer, Lola?” pleaded he, in a tone of touching humility, as she drew away her hand.

“It is a mistake, Cyrus; you do not love me; and it is unkind to come and tease me, now that I have other troubles to bear. We will be friends still, if you like; but I am young, and should break my heart to know that you *endured* me only as any thing else.”

“What do you expect from me in proof of my life?” cried Cyrus, rather angry; “these are not the days when lovers are condemned to gather posies from the side of dangerous gulfs, or to make a crusade against wild beasts, in testimony of their devotion.”

“I think, Cyrus, you came to insult me!” and this time Lola’s lip trembled with passion instead of sorrow. “You can go! I will never see you any more!” And the next moment he was alone.

The self-confident young man left the cottage quite subdued and bewildered by this unexpected issue of his visit; his wildest anticipations had not foreseen repulse so complete and decisive. The indignant pride that had flashed into Lola’s countenance was very different from the childish petulance she used to betray aforetime when he vexed her. He began to perceive that he *had* insulted her by the presumption that her fondness for him was so infatuated that, like a bondswoman, she would gratefully accept any little dole of affection it pleased his gracious mastership to extend to her. And, indeed, he began to ask himself what fairness was there in the exchange he offered her? A life for a life, a heart for

a heart? Nay; not so! "The best he had to give" was so poor and indifferent that it might well challenge the scorn of youth and purity, and yet he offered it with the affronting condescension of a sovereign to a slave.

But though momentarily subdued and bewildered, he was not conquered; the repulse, indeed, had given an interest and piquancy to the pursuit which it had not possessed before. "Poor little Lola! I know she loves me all the time," said he, soothingly, to himself; "but I was like a savage, and she was right to rebel." Nevertheless, eager to recover lost ground and re-establish his former sway, the following morning found him on his road to Chelsea. Coming to the garden gate, he saw the parlor shutters closed and all the blinds drawn down in the upper rooms; it flashed into his mind that Señor Manuel was dead. Instead, therefore, of rousing the echoes of the lane, as his custom was, he went quietly down to the back door, where Sarah immediately came to him with her apron at her swollen eyes,

"Master died last night," she told him, "and her mistress was in a sad way, but Miss Lola had got her to lie down and try to take a little rest. Miss Lola was in the drawing-room, she believed, and nearly worn out with attending on both of them."

Cyrus begged the servant to carry her a message from him, but she returned saying that Miss Lola thanked him very much for his kind inquiries, but she could not see any one. Sarah said she was *too ill* to see any one.

"Did you make her understand who it was?" Cyrus asked, very unwilling to accept this answer.

"Oh! yes, sir. She said, 'Tell Mr. Hawthorne that it is impossible I should see him.'"

"But, Sarah, it would do her good to be roused; let me steal quietly up stairs and come upon her unawares."

"You are almost like a relation to her, sir, but she spoke very plain."

"Never mind, Sarah, I will take it all upon myself;" and, passing the hesitating servant by, he strode lightly and swiftly up stairs. The drawing-room door was ajar, and he saw Lola before he entered. She was sitting upon the floor with her arms tossed across the couch, and her face buried upon them, sobbing bitterly. In a moment he was beside her, saying he hardly knew what—reproaches, caresses, pro-

testations, all with comforting intent, but violent, incoherent, impetuous.

"Cyrus," said she, gently freeing herself from his arms ; "go away. I am not able to speak to you now."

"I do not want you to speak to me; I only want you to know that I would give all my life to console you. It is cruel to drive me away when I would return a tithe of the kindness you have done to me: it makes me miserable, Lola."

"I will not forget that you are grateful, Cyrus; but I wish you would leave me."

"Sincerely, Lola? Then all our old friendship is to go for nothing? The first day that it is needed you will none of it?"

"Cyrus, do you not see you are urging me past my strength? I have had no rest night or day for a week——"

She looked up at him pitifully with eyes dim with tears, and then turned slowly away convulsed with weeping.

"Oh! Lola, Lola," cried Cyrus, snatching one of her hands and kissing it passionately, "forgive me yesterday—I was presumptuous and absurd, but I love you—believe *that* at least."

"Go away, go away; I cannot bear it, Cyrus; you are unfeeling for me—nay, you always were, but you might spare me now;" and she wrenched herself from him, and walked to the farther end of the room.

He stood looking at her pallid cheeks, heavy eyes, heaving bosom, until a profound pity touched him—he was unkind, hard, selfish, to choose such a moment to plead any cause of his own, and yet he had some lurking prescience that after he had left her she would feel more content that he had been. Neglect would have hurt her more keenly than over-persistence. After a little longer hesitation, he said:

"Good bye, Lola, since I trouble you!"

"Good bye, Cyrus."

When he was gone, the poor girl crouched her weary limbs upon the sofa, drew the duvet over her feet, and in the midst of thinking of him fell into an exhausted slumber which lasted several hours. She awoke more collected, and her first thought flew straight to him—"If he only loved me."—Then with a quick self-reproach she remembered her widowed aunt, and, shedding back her hair from her heated face and eyes, she sought her in her chamber.

Uncle Manuel had not been the most amiable of relatives in his lifetime : but these two women found in him much to regret ; his wife had always dutifully admired and obeyed him, and Lola, while resisting occasionally the pressure of his authority, had given him credit for wishing her real advantage and success. Therefore they sat together talking about him and endowing him with many imaginary graces, until they felt the relief of having done his memory the justice which had not invariably been accorded to him while he was still with them. They were interrupted by one of those prosaic incidents that intermeddle with the most solemn circumstances of life—the arrival of Aunt Manuel's dress-maker ; and when she was gone, the widow felt equal to speaking of more ordinary events.

"Sarah tells me Mr. Hawthorne has been here, and that he *would* see you, Lola?" said she, interrogatively.

"Yes."

"It was kindly meant in him, I dare say."

"Yes."

"If poor Fritz were in London, he would come to your uncle's funeral ; he had a great respect for him."

"Yes."

Aunt Manuel sighed ; Lola never was a good gossip, and now she looked too preoccupied for any thing beyond monosyllables. The widow was relieved when Sarah came in with her wordy condolences, and her niece lapsed into a long, drear reverie, the secret burden of which was—"Oh ! if he only loved me!"

## V.

Every day during the week that Uncle Manuel lay dead in the house, Sarah brought up to Lola kind inquiries from Cyrus Hawthorne, but he no more forced his way into her presence. The day after the funeral, she and Aunt Manuel talked of their future arrangements. The former proposed to give up her cottage at Chelsea and return to Canterbury, where most of her own relatives congregated, and she was desirous that Lola should accompany her ; but Lola said she thought not.

"*Why* not, my dear ? you are welcome to a share of all I have," persisted Aunt Manuel, kindly.

"I must rely upon myself some day, and therefore I would

rather begin at once while my uncle's friends remember me," was the reply.

"That is a more practical reason than I should have expected from you, Lola; you have great good sense when some fancy or passion does not blind you. But, my love, will you let me ask you one question? Do you mean to allow Cyrus Hawthorne to remain on the same terms with you as formerly? because it is most unwise——"

"I do not; it is not possible any longer."

"Lola, has he asked you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"Well, my dear——" and Aunt Manuel paused for explanation.

"Nothing more, aunt," replied Lola, half turning away.

"How, nothing more, Lola? What do you mean?"

"He does not really love me, and I shall never give myself away to a man who does not love me."

"But what do you want? Is not his desiring to marry you a sign that he loves you?"

"No—he takes pity on me; he is grateful, and would be generous; but there is a difference between that and love."

"Now, I call that truly contrary, Lola. Do you suppose that at thirty a man is to be as ignorant, enthusiastic, and new as yourself at seventeen? Are you jealous that he has liked other people before you? That is very weak and foolish!"

"I am not jealous of any one whom he has liked before, but I should be very jealous of a divided affection now. Besides, do you think I could not tell if he loved me?"

"You young girls are always full of romantic, impossible expectancies, and that is the reason there are so many disappointed, dissatisfied, and unhappy wives in the world. You are truly attached to Cyrus, and it is clear he cannot do long without you—that is a solid foundation for happiness. It is what your Uncle Manuel and I had—you saw it yourself. When could he dispense with me? Why, I was wife, sister, servant, mother, all in one to him; and I assure you, my dear, I think, from my own experience, that that wife is the best off whose husband does find in her a collected edition of woman-kind, as it were, and they are the most treasured wives too. Picture to yourself how lost your Uncle Manuel would have been if I had happened to die the first!"

"But I am young, aunt; and it is natural that I should wish to be loved for myself."

"Then, my dear, all I can say is, you should have listened to Fritz."

Lola thought Aunt Manuel peculiarly aggravating, but she lowered her arms and retired defeated from that contest.

"You had better make up your mind to go to Canterbury with me for six months," by and bye said Aunt Manuel, returning to the original question in dispute; "that will give you time to reflect and settle matters as you would never do now. Important steps should never be hasty steps, especially when they are irretraceable."

"We have still a week or two to remain here."

While Lola was speaking, Sarah came to the door:

"Mr. Hawthorne's kind regards, and he wishes to know how the ladies are to-day."

"Is he to come in, Lola?" asked Aunt Manuel, in a subdued voice, and as Lola colored and hesitated she turned to Sarah and said, "Tell Mr. Hawthorne he may come in if he pleases."

Lola went to stir the fire and was thus employed when Cyrus entered, so that as she turned to greet him there was an excuse for the deep crimson flush upon her face. She did not say any thing that was audible; and immediately turning away, left him to talk to Aunt Manuel. Cyrus, glancing toward her soon after, saw that she was very pale, but her countenance had lost the wan desolateness of expression which it wore at their last meeting; she had taken up some work, and he could not help noticing how her little hands shook as she held it. He longed to take them in his, and see her look at him again with the old confidence and affection; for he could not make up his mind to believe that he had lost them for good and all, though there were no signs of their survival. He was not encouraged to remain long, and the beautiful, faithful eyes which he had learned to read so thoroughly, gave him no chance of looking into their depths, even at parting. Lola would not meet his questioning gaze, or give him the slightest response.

But that night she received her first love-letter—urgent, pathetic, reproachful, tender, foolish, tautological, as such documents mostly are, but for all that pleasant enough. She blushed over it and cried over it no little, and said to

herself how wrong and unkind it was of her to try to quarrel with Cyrus; "for if he only *loves* me," added she, with an unconscious change in the time of the verb, "if he only loves me, I am sure I love him."

## VI.

Before finally removing to Canterbury, Aunt Manuel said, that, winter though it was, she should like to go down to the sea for a short time, as well for Lola's sake as for her own. Lola wanted bracing up after their recent watching and anxiety, and a thorough, idle change would be the best of remedies for her. Lola did not gainsay it, and accordingly, one morning about a fortnight after Uncle Manuel's burial they went off to Hastings. As they had no friends there, perhaps it was not altogether matter of regret that Cyrus Hawthorne journeyed down also and took lodgings convenient to theirs; which arrangement led naturally to their being very much together, Lola and Cyrus taking walks upon the breezy cliffs, almost always in company; from which, let it be understood, a mutual good understanding was re-established.

How it had been brought about I cannot explain; I think it grew insensibly out of that letter—love-letter—and the frequent meetings that followed it. How is it possible for two young people to wear aggrieved countenances when their hearts are singing for joy, or to be sullenly dignified toward each other when they are possessed by a holy spirit of forgiveness? It was not in Lola's nature to be angry long with any one whom she loved, and I am willing to allow that Cyrus made his peace too easily; but it must be acknowledged that it *was* made; that the Christmas rose of his life bloomed for him fairly, frosts, winds, rains, blights notwithstanding. Everybody does not get his deserts in this world, or he would have had to walk solitary henceforward over ragged rocks and salt, sterile wildernesses, instead of finding this flower of promise on the threshold of a new year.

You may, perhaps, think that, considering the cool sentiments that possessed him when he sought Lola at Chelsea, if she had sent him quite away, he would not have been very grievously disappointed. I should not like to be sure of that.



Lola had a thousand little piquancies, beauties, novelties, graces, which dawned upon him day by day. Behold, this little volume of feminine human nature, so daintily bound and embellished, of which he thought he knew every page and every line as well as he knew the alphabet, had many chapters in richly illuminated cipher that he could not read at all, to which he was only now discovering the key—chapters that would, maybe, serve him a life time to con perfectly.

It is very certain that men love to be entertained; no surer extinguisher of passion, affection, respect, than a yawning boredom. Now, Cyrus could have danced attendance upon Lola with infinite satisfaction from morning until night if she would have let him, but she would not. He found himself less enthralled on the subject of his own opinions, wishes, sensations, than at any former period of their acquaintance, and could talk of other things beside, though Lola never wearied to hear him on the old theme. Insensibly much of the eager, impetuous generosity of his youth returned to him, and if he was a little exacting still of Lola's thoughts, he repaid her in kind, and she was not disposed to quarrel with that. She did not say any longer, "If he *only* loved me;" for she was sure he did.

Just before they left Hastings for Canterbury, Aunt Manuel said to her, "You and Cyrus are quite friends again?"

"Yes," replied Lola, surprised at this very obvious remark.

"Because, remember you have neither of you vouchsafed me a word of explanation, and I did not choose to interfere."

Lola colored a little, but she made no reply then, but that evening, when she was absent from the room in supposed quest of a new song that was mislaid, Cyrus informed the respectable aunt that, when the days of mourning for Uncle Manuel were ended, Lola and he had agreed to cast in their lot together "for better for worse, till death should them part."

## VII.

Poetical justice is too pure and simple to fit itself to the complexity of human affairs. How much is there of it in your life or mine, my friend? As much or as little probably as appears in this chronicle of the brothers Hawthorne.

By its code the two heroes of this history should change places. Robert should be blest with a young, lovely, and loving spouse, with troops of friends, with abundant wealth, with every honor and prosperity under the sun; and yet we must leave him in Dorothea Sancton's homely company, without any special treasure of affection or happiness of which we can take cognizance; we must leave him busy in the varnish manufactory, early and late—leave him to the poor chapel folk, and the institute folk, and the common-place, every-day traffic of middle life—we must leave him doing his duty in the station to which it pleased God to call him, though poetical justice be ever so dissatisfied.

Cyrus should, by rights, drivel away his life in useless remorse for wasted time, missed opportunities, perverted talents, and poor Laury lost and dead through him. He should have for his abiding yokefellow, miserable discontent, and for his future a blank. Poetical justice would have served him so, but Providence gives him another chance. Gives him Lola, happy and eager to consecrate herself to him; to love him, hope for him, encourage him, console him. Gives him a fine fortune, friends to spare, good things of life abundantly to enjoy. Gives him by and bye the energy to strive and work with brain and pen, and redeem past follies; gives him some little honor and glory in his day and generation, and lets him plume himself in the idea that he will not be quite forgotten of men when he is dead.

Poetical justice would let Phyllis remain in perpetual widowhood; but as the world goes round she goes with it, and reappears after her mourning as Countess of Clevedon—a distinguished leader in fashionable circles, hereafter mother of gallant sons, mother of Sylvia, beautiful Duchess in the Scottish peerage—a very successful and much admired great lady.

Poetical justice would marry Dorothea Sancton to somebody very excellent, but her guardian angel left her to dress St. Catherine's hair, and broaden into an exact fac-simile of old-maid Kibblewhite.

And so a truce to poetical justice!

The wedding bells begin to ring, and the curtain falls.

THE END.

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